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WE CELEBRATE OUR TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY

Twenty years ago this month, in October 1959, the first issue of *The African Communist* made its appearance. A cyclostyled journal of 22 pages, it bore no imprint of either publisher or printer and gave no indication that it emanated from South Africa, let alone from the South African Communist Party. Announcing itself modestly in a box on the back page headed "This Magazine", it said:

"Communism has become the vital social and political belief of our times. Already one third of mankind has chosen the road to socialism under the leading banners of the Marxist parties. Everywhere else, millions of men and women press forward to their own liberation, inspired by the parties of Communism.

"In this, as in so much else, Africa lags behind the world. The forces of imperialism, which have made Africa the 'dark continent', have also kept the people curtained off from the liberating spirit of Communism.

"This magazine 'The African Communist' has been started by a

group of Marxist-Leninists in Africa, to defend and spread the inspiring ideas of Communism in our great Continent, and to apply the brilliant scientific method of Marxism to the solution of its problems.

"It is being produced in conditions of great difficulty and danger. Nevertheless we mean to go on publishing it, because we know that Africa needs Communist thought, as dry and thirsty soil needs rain.

"To you, the reader, we say, comrade and fellow-worker, wherever you may be, read and study this magazine. Pass it on to fellow-workers and form groups to discuss it. These groups may become the foundation stones of great and important Communist Parties in many lands that will bring salvation to your country".

The journal was written and produced entirely from our own resources in South Africa. The Communist Party of South Africa had dissolved itself in June 1950 a few days before it was due to be illegalised under the Suppression of Communism Act then being rushed through Parliament. Its successor the South African Communist Party had come into being shortly afterwards and in the ensuing years had broadened its scope and managed to hold a number of clandestine national congresses, but had not yet publicly proclaimed its existence. The 1950s had been a decade of growing mass action by the oppressed people of South Africa, opening with the agitation against the Suppression of Communism Bill which culminated in the general strike on June 26, South Africa's first "Freedom Day"; passing through the great Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter; the Alexandra bus boycotts, the potato boycott, the treason trial, the anti-pass campaigns, the campaigns against the Coloured Vote bills and Bantu Education, a series of political strikes called by the Congress Alliance, the revolts in the reserves against cattle culling and Bantu Authorities. Never had class and race conflict in South Africa been sharper; never had political consciousness spread deeper amongst the mass of the people. Did we but know it, we stood on the eve of Sharpeville and the state of emergency, one of the great watersheds of our long history of struggle.

The second issue of *The African Communist* in fact appeared in April 1960, but had obviously been prepared before the emergency, which was not reflected in its pages. This time the journal was

printed, but it still bore no imprint, and still gave no indication of its source, though an editorial note announced that "the White Supremacy Government of South Africa, headed by Nazi Verwoerd, had done our magazine the great honour of banning it in that country". It was on July 14, in the middle of the emergency, that a leaflet appeared announcing to the world that the SACP had reconstituted itself, and issue No. 3 of *The African Communist*, dated September 1960, carried the acknowledgment which it still bears on page 1 of each issue that it is published "in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party".

Because of the circumstances in which it was produced and for reasons of security, the first issue of *The African Communist* scarcely referred to the situation in South Africa itself, and addressed itself in a general way to the peoples and problems of Africa as a whole. The main editorial was entitled "The New Africa – Capitalist or Socialist"; Tussaint contributed a piece on "Marxism – The Science of Change"; G.M. wrote a piece on Uganda and George Maxwell discussed "Problems of the African Revolution". The picture in Africa was one of the apparent retreat of imperialism. In 1950 there were only four countries in Africa which were nominally independent – Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa. In 1951 Libya became independent; in 1956 Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia; in 1957 Ghana, in 1958 Guinea and Algeria. Up to that point independent states embraced only one third of the area and one half of the population of the continent. The 1960s constituted the great decade of African independence, and by 1970 the political map of Africa, with the exception of the south, was almost entirely black.

Welcoming the gains of the decade, the main editorial of issue No. 39 of *The African Communist*, fourth quarter 1969, at the same time drew attention to the fact that the former imperialist masters of Africa, though forced to retreat from formal political control, had yet managed to retain their positions of domination over the continent through the system of neo-colonialism. Political independence had not been followed by economic emancipation through which the mineral and other wealth and resources of Africa could be restored to their rightful owners, the African people. And the editorial added:

"Even today, ten years after Africa year, the year of independence, 1960, the main ideology of imperialism — anti-Communism — continues to prevail over most of the Continent. Almost everywhere in Africa the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism are discouraged or even prohibited by the independent governments, just as the former colonial rulers did before them. Marxist parties of the workers and toiling masses are stifled or prohibited; their leaders subjected to persecution".

The past 10 years have recorded an enormous change in the balance of forces between imperialism and progress. Inexorably the struggle of the people in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent territories has led to the destruction of one imperialist outpost after another, the downfall of a succession of tyrannical regimes with which the imperialists have been forced to ally themselves in an attempt to hold back the popular revolution. Perhaps the most significant victory of the decade was the expulsion of the imperialists from Vietnam, the forces of the captialist world's most powerful state being literally driven into the sea. This momentous event marked the beginning of the end of American domination in many quarters of the world, and demonstrated that the forces of national liberation, assisted by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, were capable of overcoming any obstacle thrown up by the imperialists.

The catalogue of reverses suffered by the imperialists during the decade continued almost without interruption. In Europe the fascist dictatorships of Greece, Spain and Portugal were swept away. In Asia the tyrannical regime of the Shah was brought to an end, and Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Yemen launched on the path of socialism. In the shadow of the United States itself revolution has toppled the dictatorial regime of Somoza in Nicaragua, and reactionary regimes in Jamaica, Grenada and Dominica have been replaced. In Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Congo now have regimes committed to the implementation of programmes based on the principles of scientific socialism.

Progress to a higher stage of development is everywhere made possible only by struggle, and today no corner of the world is able to isolate itself from the conflict between the forces of progress and reaction which rages on every side. The struggle does not always proceed evenly, but flows, now this way now that, depending on the

local conditions and balance of forces. The cause of anti-imperialism has had its setbacks — in Chile, in Egypt and elsewhere. But the overall perspective of the decade is unmistakable — imperialism on the retreat, the popular armies on the advance. No longer can the British send gunboats to Africa or Asia to crush popular rebellions. No longer can an American president cheerfully order his B-52s to bomb the hell out of faceless "gooks" and "wogs" in far away countries. He even hesitates to act when revolution is raging in his own back yard.

We do not want to argue that imperialism is a paper tiger. It is not, and is still capable of direct action as the French have demonstrated in Shaba and Chad, and South Africa and Israel in their respective regions. But on the whole the tactics of the imperialists have changed. Recognising that the initiative no longer rests with them, they are fighting a rearguard action if possible to crush but certainly to divert or delay the revolution. They seek surrogates to rule in their interests. They seek compromise in Namibia and Zimbabwe as an alternative to the open conflict which experience has taught them they must eventually lose. Even in South Africa our racist rulers dread another Soweto bloodbath, and seek through the Wiehahn and Riekert commissions and the promotion of Bantustans to build up some sort of black elite with which they can co-operate, at the expense, of course, of the majority.

Revolution without ideology is blind, and so is counter-revolution. Everywhere our enemies, unable to propagate the virtues of a capitalist system which has so patently failed, are putting their faith in anti-communism. Daily the presses in the capitalist countries spew forth hatred of communism, and denigration of the achievements of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. The mantle of Goebbels has fallen on the shoulders of the press and television moguls who mobilise their immense resources to defend the interests of the ruling class. They oppose SALT II, they oppose detente, they oppose disarmament; they condition the masses for war.

Nevertheless we can rejoice, on our 20th birthday, that our cause has made great advances in Africa in recent years. We have African governments openly committed to Marxism-Leninism, almost all committed to some form of socialism, only the tiny minority daring to preach the virtues of a private enterprise which has left our

continent in desperate poverty after centuries of rapacious colonialism. We can also record that bitter experience has exposed the treachery of the diversionary ideology of Maoism, working everywhere in Africa in alliance with imperialism to undermine the freedom and independence of the African countries and to impede the unity and progress of the liberation movements.

As last year's meeting of Communist and workers' parties of Africa declared:

"The Communists were among the first in the African continent to lay bare the true nature of imperialism, colonialism and racism, and set as the immediate practical goal the realisation of the people's demand for independence and self-determination in their revolutionary struggle against foreign enslavers. The Communists were the first in the continent to show the African peoples that the struggle against imperialism, for democracy and social progress ultimately meant a struggle for socialism".

It was the ceaseless work of the Communists and the massive and unselfish contribution of the socialist countries to the cause of anti-imperialism and national liberation which has convinced Africa of the value of proletarian internationalism. Today Marxism-Leninism is more relevant in Africa than ever before. No amount of repression has been able to prevent the circulation of Marxist ideas. Even in our own country, where an extensive anti-Communist censorship is in operation, recent opinion surveys have shown that more and more of the oppressed black majority are openly declaring their adherence to Marxism.

The African Communist can claim to have made an invaluable contribution to this process of enlightenment, not only in our own South Africa, but throughout our continent. Not all the efforts of the security police have been able to prevent the circulation of our journal at home, and its influence and prestige in independent Africa is growing with every issue. As this issue demonstrates, we are becoming what we set out to be, "a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent". Our printing order increases steadily quarter by quarter.

We do not propose to rest on our laurels. Indeed, life will not allow it. As the struggle for social change in our continent intensifies, as the Southern African revolution reaches its climax, we rededicate

oursleves to the task which confronted us when we set out 20 years ago — "to defend and spread the inspiring and liberating ideas of Communism in our great continent, and to apply the brilliant scientific method of Marxism to the solution of its problems".

A CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

The struggle for the liberation of our country is going to be long-drawn-out and bitter. Very many generations have already participated in this arduous task, and many men, women and children have sacrificed their lives, while others just fell by the wayside finding the task too heavy for them.

Let us remember the women of Windhoek who fought for their rights in 1913, as well as the peasants of Zeerust and the women of Natal in the 1950s who challenged the supreme white authority. Our struggle in South Africa is a struggle for the life and dignity of man, and at these times the whole people rose to answer the call of liberation.

The revolutionary youth at these times fully participated in that noble struggle, and stood side by side with their parents and relatives to challenge the fascist beast. One would like to think that present-day youth is following in the footsteps of their predecessors. Maybe the situation in the past was slightly different from what it is now — conditions of struggle change. But the enemy remains the same and the challenge the same, therefore the overriding task is the same.

Of course the challenge that faces the youth today has additional complications. The reactionary forces that confront the liberation movement are busy trying to divert the youth from the struggle, trying to set the youth against their parents and vice versa. During the days of the Soweto uprising, parents were being coerced by police to denounce their children as if they were street loafers or hooligans.

On the other hand, ultra-left organisations were working on the youth to denounce their parents as failures and to hold them responsible for the coming into existence of things like Bantu Education, the pass laws and all the problems of location life. There were tendencies to describe the youth as more revolutionary than

their parents. Even the enemy echoed some of these sentiments.

People spoke of the "generation gap", and forgot about the repression that was engulfing the whole of the black population. It was as if there had never been a battle of Bulhoek or Isandhlwana, as if there had never been a 1946 mine strike or a peasant uprising in Sekhukhuneland. Those who overlook or forget the many, many glorious struggles of the past are working for the division of the oppressed people. This is a gift to the enemy.

There is an attempt to lure the youth into a so-called "third force". They are being praised to the skies as "leaders" and offered huge sums of money to play around, but the aim behind all this is to drive them away from the mainstream of the struggle. Then there are even some of the youth who are being drawn into the enemy camp, and even into the police force to fight against their own people and prevent them from liberating their own country. In this case we can see that the spread of unemployment has played a major part in undermining these people. However, we do not intend to make excuses for them. In all freedom struggles people have sacrificed everything for liberty and we expect our youth to stand in the ranks of the people's army rather than that of the enemy.

"The youth" are not something clutched from thin air without a past or a future. They are a certain generation of our people. Whatever they do, if they want to be successful they must take into account the experience of past generations, they must copy the courage of their forefathers and emulate their elder brothers in the fight against colonialism, racism and imperialism. They need to understand that the foundations of struggle were laid by those who came before them. The least they can do for the heroes of the past is to honour them.

If the truth be told, we need nothing new or special from the youth other than that they carry on from where their forebears left off. What is required from any new generation is continuity. In the present period the revolutionary youth has become an important factor in the struggle for liberation, but they must not allow themselves to be divided from those who went before them. When the Mandelas, Sisulus, Lutulis, Fischers and others went into action facing imprisonment and possible death, it was because they were fighting the same evils as the youth are fighting today. They had

hoped with every justification that the future generations would carry on the struggle to which they had devoted their lives.

Of course they knew, having been young themselves, that young people who are in the midst of struggle are at times very hot-blooded. But as time goes on the youth have to learn to be patient and face the challenge of the enemy in a more organised and systematic fashion. That is what is called for today.

Present-day youth, like all our people, have to go out and organise. They must mobilise their colleagues to overthrow the yoke of the fascists who rule in our country, prepare them for the big fight which lies ahead. They must build up the people's organisations, make others take part in the work of organisation, preparation and training. They must even take part in teaching our people to read and write. They must explain the intricate system of oppression under which we suffer and show the road to the future, explain the science of struggle. On occasion they must teach the people the simple art of manufacturing home-made bombs. They must explain that our struggle, like all the struggles for liberation in the past, is part and parcel of the international struggle against colonialism and imperialism. It is the task of our youth to impart this knowledge, and any other knowledge they have gained, to our people.

Especially we must explain to the people the evil nature of imperialism, perhaps our most sinister enemy. Our struggle cannot be isolated from the world struggle. We must explain how it is that, at a time when apartheid is condemned by all mankind, the imperialists come to the aid of the regime in order to preserve their profits. The British give them Buccaneers, the Americans sell them sophisticated weapons and know-how, the French and Japanese give them licences to manufacture weapons, the West Germans help them with the atomic bomb. Our youth must understand these things, and also why it is that our revolutionary struggle receives consistent help from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. We are part and parcel of a historical process in which the old is giving way to the new.

As we prepare ourselves for the coming onslaught, the whole continent of Africa looks on with great expectations, for the future of the African continent depends on the liberation of South Africa. So long as southern Africa remains under the domination of the racists

and imperialists, the rest of Africa can never be truly free.

The Youth In Umkhonto

Those young people who left the country before the Soweto uprising of 1976 did so for many reasons; others remained behind to continue with their education. Whatever knowledge they acquired will be needed at some time during or after the struggle.

Amongst those who left are a small minority of unfortunate cases who "dropped out" and deteriorated into social misfits. Some became pimps and others became addicted to drugs; into the ranks of some of these the enemy made inroads, recruiting spies and informers.

But the biggest group and the most honourable is one which we are proud to work with, those who have joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. They have prepared their minds for the hardships that lie ahead. They have fixed their sights on the enemy and are ready for any eventuality. In a number of cases they have already seen action and acquitted themselves in a way that deserves honourable mention. When the enemy tried to instil fear into them they did not flinch, and their courage and determination filled the enemy with rage. So long as we have such young people in our ranks we need have no fears for the future.

The Youth And The Working Class

The young people are part of the population which gave them birth, and South Africa being what it is, this means that most of them belong to the working class. The youth are not a class in themselves, but part of the working class which is destined by history to liberate mankind.

To prepare themselves for active participation in the struggle of the working class the youth must understand that the working class is the leading force, and they must study the emancipating ideas of socialism, absorb the ideology of the working class, Marxism-Leninism. At the same time, it is important that the study of Marxism-Leninism does not boil down to memorising ready-made phrases. The youth must be made to see that Marxism-Leninism helps them to think independently, helps them to solve social problems. By enabling them to understand the laws and prospects of

social development Marxism-Leninism equips them with the understanding and determination to carry on an irreconcilable struggle against racist and bourgeois ideas emanating from the ruling capitalist class. In this way the youth can discard wrong thoughts of simply participating in the struggle for purposes of personal advancement and leadership rather than liberating mankind.

Progressive organisations all over the world are casting their attention to the outstanding qualities of young people, harnessing the daring and initiative of the broadest sections of the youth against racism, colonialism and imperialism. The youth are being brought nearer to the stand of the working class and in a multitude of ways are being brought face to face with the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

In this way our own young people, men and women, are being brought into the orbit of international ideas, and are being called on to play an active role against the greedy multi-national corporations that are robbing them, against imperialism in its cruellest form and to stand on the same platform as the whole of progressive mankind.

For us the lofty duty of our youth is the inculcation of the Marxist-Leninist world outlook and the principles of proletarian internationalism, which will equip them to play the most effective role in the national liberation movement. If the youth advance on these lines, our future is assured.

THE WIEHAHN REPORT

STATE PLAN TO SHACKLE AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS

by R. S. Nyameko

Twenty three years ago the present Nationalist Party enacted the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1956[1]. This measure extended job reservation according to colour in all sectors of the economy and forced workers to split their unions along colour lines.

The Act confirmed and strengthened the provision excluding Africans from the registered trade unions, thereby denying them the statutory right to negotiate or bargain with the bosses over wages and working conditions.

This piece of racial legislation followed the Botha Report of the Industrial Legislation Commission[2] appointed in 1948, a few months after the Nationalist Party took office. It was this report that prepared the way for vicious discrimination against black workers in the labour market and trade union organisation.

For reasons to be discussed later, the Vorster-Botha regime claimed in 1977 and subsequently an intention to eliminate some of the most blatant racist clauses in the I.C. Act.

This "strategy-claim" led to the appointment of the Wiehahn Commission of inquiry into labour legislation in August and in October 1977 the Riekert Commission of inquiry into legislation affecting the utilisation of manpower.[3]

Their reports were put before Parliament in May 1979, at the height of the Cabinet crisis caused by the appalling misuse of public funds to improve the regime's image at home and abroad.

The Vorster-Botha gang in desperation to divert public opinion from the so-called Muldergate scandal presented the "new-look" policy towards black workers and the labour market in the industrial sector.

The Nationalists are grandmasters in the art of sticking labels on their oppressive laws and policies, as when they intensified restriction on Africans' movements by means of the Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act, or again when they barred Africans from "open" universities under the Extension of University Education Act.

So also in the matter of labour laws. Having excluded Africans from the statutory procedures for collective bargaining, the regime passed the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, 1953, under which works committees and all-white bureaucratic labour boards were set up with the idea that African trade unions would "die a natural death", in the words of Ben Schoeman, the then Minister for Labour.[4]

The system broke down under the challenge presented by the massive strikes of African workers in Natal in 1973. The strike wave spread to other provinces and continued up to 1976, engulfing workers in many sectors including the mining industry, beginning with the murder by police of eleven African strikers at Carletonville. It was the series of "rolling strikes" and "riots" on the mines from 1973 to 1977 that forced the Chamber of Mines to make substantial concessions to the African workers in the form of wage increases and job opportunities. When in September 1974 Anglo-American chief Harry Oppenheimer suggested that African workers should have the right to organise unions and engage in collective bargaining, Vorster bitterly attacked him for daring to propose this.

But the mineowners, plagued by a chronic shortage of skilled miners and facing a threat on the part of independent African states,

notably Malawi, to withdraw their migrant workers from the mines, went ahead with their labour rationalising scheme.

Employers in other branches of the economy who were also plagued by the shortage of skilled labour took their cue from this example, and agitated more vigorously than ever for the scrapping of the industrial colour bar.

An additional factor of great significance was the excellent work by the international trade union and anti-apartheid movements and support groups in Europe, America, Canada, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. They not only exposed the violations of human rights committed in South Africa under the racist labour laws, but demanded from their governments and employers the introduction of sanctions in the form of disinvestment, trade boycotts and a ban on migration to South Africa.

This worldwide agitation produced such memorable events as the 1st International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid and the adoption of a programme of action by the international labour movement embracing the WCL, WFTU, ICFTU and OATUC in June 1973 at Geneva and subsequent conferences.

Then came the Soweto uprising. It exposed the falsity of the regime's claim that the vast majority of black people were content, that S.A. enjoyed an unparalleled condition of peace and stability, that only a handful of communist-led agitators and mischief-makers were in opposition to apartheid policies and separate development (Bantustans). It took the Government some time to realise that S.A. would never be the same again, and that the revolutionary upsurge by the younger generation of students and intellectuals marked a qualitative change in black awareness and working class outlook. The 1973 strikes and the 1976 uprising were ominous warnings of the enormous discontent and deep-seated hatred of our people of the entire apartheid system and their readiness to defy it even at the risk of death.

It is against this background that the appointment of the two commissions and their recommendations must be understood. Ironically enough the circumstances that produced the Muldergate scandal also produced these commissions, namely the regime's defiance of world opinion and its despicable attacks on the people's rights and freedoms.

The Wiehahn Commission

Prof. N. Wiehahn, the chairman of the commission, is a member of the Broederbond and a former railway labourer, adviser to the Minister of Labour and head of the Institute of Industrial Relations at the University of South Africa (UNISA). UNISA is a non-residential university for external students of all races. Because it has no institutionalised colour bar, though there is much informal discrimination, it has acquired a wide reputation spreading far beyond the boundaries of S.A.

Wiehahn had acquired a reputation as an advanced and liberal thinker on the condition of the S.A. economy and the effect of its caste-like rigidities on the flow of workers, their training and advancement. Sensing the mood prevalent among the bigger industrialists and mine owners he put forward the old radical arguments for the recognition of African trade unions and an open labour market. In his inaugural address to the Institute of Labour Relations at UNISA, in June 1977 "The Regulation of Labour Relations in a changing South Africa" he spoke of the right of all workers to trade unions. Assocom's evidence to the Cilliers Commission recommended that "Africans should be given freedom of movement and be allowed to negotiate with employers on the same basis as whites".[5]

Wiehahn's appointment, the report and recommendations of his commission [6] received a great deal of advance publicity which testified to his skill as a propagandist for the regime and exponent of the personality cult. His fellow comissioners were overwhelmingly white and Afrikaners at that. Of the 16 members of the commission (including the chairman and secretary) 11 are Afrikaners by name, two have English names, one was an African (a lecturer at UNISA), one an Indian TUCSA affiliated trade unionist and member of the stooge SA Indian Council and one a Coloured ex-trade unionist. There were 4 white trade union representatives on the Commission, but not a single representative of the African trade unions and not a single woman. The commission included four representatives of industry, mining and commerce, and Prof. P.J. van der Merwe, of the University of Pretoria, an exponent of separate development and the denial of rights for African workers except in the Bantustans!

Wiehahn and his fellow commissioners had to consider the poor

performance of the economy, its low rate of growth, the chronic shortage of manpower in technical, skilled and semi-skilled categories, the high incidence of unemployment among African workers, the persistent recurrence of strikes amongst Africans in spite of the penalties they are subjected to, and the extremely bad reputation that the racists have gained for themselves and their regime in the international community of businessmen and the international labour movement. Anyone with an understanding of the situation could see the need for cleansing the Augean stables of South Africa's load of racial rubbish in the labour market.

Reading Part 1 of the 62-page Wiehahn Report (there are 6 more parts still to come) one is confronted with a rehash of South Africa's race discriminatory industrial laws, a false evaluation of the history, growth and struggles of African trade unions but above all a big bluff to conceal the harsh realities of an authoritarian profit-orientated and exploitative capitalist class operating behind a facade of laissez-faire economic platitudes. Wiehahn did not perform the act of purification which he promised. But Lucy Mvubelo said, clasping her hands and closing her eyes: "My dream has come true — now I can die peacefully".[7]

The recommendations demonstrated that reactionary forces and no doubt his own native inclination proved to be overwhelming. The old combination of a reactionary entrenched white labour aristocracy and the inherent conservatism of Afrikaner nationalism committed to the maintenance of Afrikaner hegemony and white minority rule triumphed over the rationale of competitive capitalism, equal opportunities, freedom of employment, and no discrimination in labour laws.

Extremist Attitudes

It is beyond the scope of this article to examine every detail of the Commissioner's report and recommendations, or the many objections to the majority proposals raised by the most vicious exponents of racism. However, it is hard to avoid reference to the extremist attitude of the President of the South African Confederation of Labour, Attie Niewoudt, who in his minority report dissented from the Commission's view that the statutory job reservation provisions should be repealed. Niewoudt argued:

> "Statutory work reservation is necessary to ensure inter-racial harmony in the workplace particularly in view of the heterogeneous composition of the labour force and the dangers inherent in unfair inter-racial competition, between workers of different cultural backgrounds and at different levels of development."[8]

and

> "In practice this (work reservation) has contributed to industrial peace, improved inter-race relations and the optimal utilisation of labour in individual concerns."[9]

This is the voice of a man steeped in racial arrogance and determined to maintain the white man's interests and power at the expense of the black majority.

On the burning issue of African trade union rights the Commission recommended that trade unions should be permitted to register irrespective of the race or colour of their members — that both trade union organisations and individuals should be afforded full freedom of association and should be free to form any appropriate trade union of their choice, that any trade union which meets the requirements for registration should be eligible for registration and full participation in the statutory bargaining and dispute prevention and settlement machinery.[10]

But Attie Niewoudt argued "that the workers who at present enjoy trade union rights would be swamped by force of numbers should blacks be admitted to the registered trade union movement". "Mixed trade unions will disturb the social order and industrial peace . . ." He recommended instead that "black workers be prohibited from joining any trade union in South Africa, whether such a union is registered or not; . . . the interests of black workers be taken care of in interstate agreements." "The South African government continues to pursue and expand its decentralisation programmes in an effort to promote employment opportunities for black workers in or near their own states."[11]

Confidence Trick

Examining the Wiehahn Commission report and recommendations, one feels that the whole exercise was a big confidence trick. The Wiehahn Commission set out to secure the influx of capital into the country, to give South Africa's trading partners — the industrialists,

bankers, multi-national corporations of western Europe, USA and Japan — a plausible pretext for resisting the growing pressure for boycotts and sanctions against the regime, to bluff the world labour movement and the exploited and oppressed African people.

Behind the veneer of vague liberal statements and recommendations there is the real purpose to impose greater restrictions in order to protect white minority rule. Here are some of them:

"The fundamental principles underlying all adjustments to South Africa's industrial relations legislation should be: the preservation of industrial peace as a primary objective . . . a unitary and integrated industrial relations system incorporating both the industrial council and committee systems; the fullest possible expression of the principle of self-governance; and the simultaneous promotion of decentralised consultation at regional and enterprise levels."[12]

The report is dotted with grand-sounding but vague and undefined phrases, borrowed from the ILO conventions, such as proclaiming the necessity to promote "industrial freedom to participate in decision making processes", "freedom and rights to organise", "no restrictions or qualifications should be placed on the eligibility for trade union membership of any worker".[13]

But four pages later the Commission observes:

"The law protects the right of a union to prescribe in its constitution who qualifies for membership and who does not. It is unlikely in the extreme that unions would voluntarily expose themselves to such possible domination if they had at their disposal simple means of preventing it — by requiring for example that membership would be open only to persons who have worked a specified qualifying period (such as two years) within the particular industry . . . Where migrants were to be admitted in signficant numbers, the union would also be fully at liberty to restrict voting rights in a similar manner".[14]

It is easy to see through this fraud. On the one hand the report recommends no restrictions be introduced, but then gives white trade unions carte blanche to impose any restrictions they deem necessary to protect their interests. And the commission only recommends some form of trade union recognition because it fears

"That unless African trade unions are brought into the statutory system as soon as possible African workers may well be drawn into

informal organisational structures which might in the long run not be possible to dismantle or restructure".[15]

It is in this context that one must interpret the Commission's conclusion that incorporation poses "a far lesser threat than would the continued denial of elementary rights and the perpetuation of the existing uncontrolled situation of proliferation."[16]

The Commission's division of the African working class into "frontier-commuters", "migrants" and "permanent residents"[17] is a device to split the African working class into three layers, buying off one section. Those defined as "permanent residents" will become a privileged group — people with urban residential rights under section 10(1)(a) or (b) of the Urban Areas Act — to be given a special status so that their labour power can be available to meet the demands of South Africa's mining, commerical and industrial sector that a labour aristocracy and a black middle class be built up and stabilised in the major urban areas.

In November 1976, on the initiative of Harry Oppenheimer and Anton Rupert, a conference was held at the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, attended by big businessmen (including Sam Motsuenyana) to establish the Urban Foundation. Anton Rupert argued: "We (capitalists) cannot survive unless we have a free market economy, a stable black middle class".[18]

The Urban Foundation represents the interests of big capitalists. This capitalist sector, which consists of a small number of companies owned by white South African and foreign interests employs 70% of the labour force in the private sector.[19] Judge Jan Steyn called the Urban Foundation the voice of the private sector in securing "ordered advance to urban tranquillity",[20] and outlined the Urban Foundation's "fundamental aim to improve the quality of life of the urban citizen".[21]

Both the Wiehahn and Riekert commissions and reports have in fact acted on the Urban Foundation's and the Chamber of Industries' belief that "the development of a black middle class by nature would not fall prey to subversive propaganda and agitators".[22]

Strict Control

Even if the regime develops a black middle class, the mass of the African workers will still be there as "grave diggers", to use Marx'

terminology. Hence the Wiehahn commission's report proposes the incorporation of trade unions into the state apparatus by establishing bodies "which could involve interested parties in the private and public sectors in the designing and planning of future policy in the field of labour". The state's role would be that of "architect, designer, guide and initiator . . . The State is in the final analysis responsible for the preservation of industrial peace".[23]

This strategy clearly has military implications. Read together with the Defence White Paper issued during the last parliamentary session, which reiterated the need for a "total strategy", it fits in admirably with the regime's "Fortress South Africa" vision. To carry out this vision and the Nationalist Party's 1948 election manifesto, the Botha regime adopted the Wiehahn commission's recommendation to establish a National Manpower Commission (NMC), and incorporated this in the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Bill which was introduced in the dying days of the session.

The NMC is no ordinary white racist body but is intended to exercise total control over the labour supply and trade union activity. This body and the Minister of Labour have the power to rule by proclamation and place African trade unions in chains. Not for nothing is the NMC given pride of place on the very first page of the Bill.[24]

The Bill is littered with such phrases as "subject to such conditions as he may see fit to impose" and "after consultation with the National Manpower Commission". The question of migrant workers' rights to negotiations is to be decided on the advice of the NMC.

Works councils (the equivalent of the old liaison committees) are to be set up. The way in which they will operate and how exactly they will relate to the trade unions remains unspecified but the government considers it desirable that works councils "be permitted to negotiate on as many matters as possible and to come to firm agreements with employers". The NMC is requested "to give constant attention to the question of future statutory bargaining powers for the works committees and works councils in the light of developments on the labour front".

This shows not only the overriding powers of the NMC but also the regime's intentions to equip the works councils with "future statutory bargaining powers" so as to negate the trade unions. This in in line

with the Nationalist Party's 1948 election manifesto in which they described trade unions as foreign, alien bodies — a phrase recently repeated by one of the verkrampte Nationalist MPs.

In relation to the management and administration of trade unions and employers' organisations, the NMC is "requested to keep the position regarding the election or appointment of persons to responsible positions in trade unions under surveillance with a view to making recommendations if necessary."[25] Note, this requirement does not apply to the employers' organisations.

Prohibition of political activities — the NMC is to keep this aspect under scrutiny.[26] Thus, in addition to having all the strategic planning functions mentioned earlier, the NMC will also act as the state's watchdog and brain in supervision of the entire labour movement — on education, industrial relations training, registration of trade unions and trade union elections. The NMC has the power to clamp down on militant, democratic trade unions and to promote puppet unions.

This can be done simply through deregistration of unions, and the issuing of a determination that a union's activities are political. Thus the NMC will be in a position to define and rule what trade unions are permitted to do. The NMC will be a creature of the regime, and only the regime's approved people will be appointed to it. "The body will not be fully representative at any given moment".[27] Just imagine — the regime may even appoint someone like Lucy Mvubelo as a member of this puppet board — she may deserve it!

No New Era

From what we have seen it is clear that this legislation introduces no new era for black or other workers. On the contrary, it means greater repression, discrimination and the negation of free trade unionism.

It will divide the African working class into migrants, commuters and permanent urban workers.

It will destabilise existing African trade unions through the processes of registration, provisional registration and non-registration.

It aims to bring all trade unions under strict control.

The repeal of the job reservation section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act is meaningless because the power to reserve jobs is

retained by the white registered trade unions with their "closed shop principle" to decide what jobs Africans may do.

The tasks confronting our movement to defeat this legislation are great:

Workers must force their employers to negotiate with their elected union representatives. Employers must recognise the workers' rights as workers. No one must be allowed to appoint the workers' representatives, industrial committees, parallel unions or company unions.

A united front of all African trade unions and other progressive trade unions must be formed to mobilise the African, Coloured and Indian working class and progressive white workers to:

Make the proposed legislation ineffective.

Refuse to apply for trade union registration.

Form trade unions to protect the workers against vicious and cruel exploitation, national oppression, the barbaric treatment and humiliation meted out by the racists and the police terror to which our people are daily subjected.

Expose the real meaning of the regime's "new labour look" to the International labour movement and the progressive world in general, so that they should not accept Wiehahn's or the regime's confidence tricks. We must warn against this monstrous new plan to enslave the African workers and labour as a whole through the NMC.

Wiehahn has so far not received the welcome he expected. The conference of the International Metal Federation, representing 13½ million members, condemned his report. The British TUC refused to meet Wiehahn. The ILO has condemned the goverment's new bill. But we still have a lot to do to ensure that the Government's new industrial strategy is completely defeated.

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NATIONAL QUESTION AND ETHNIC PROCESSES

by Ginyibhulu Xhakalegusha

In South Africa today one notices a deepening crisis which manifests itself in many ways: the Africans are losing their South African citizenship and being granted Bantustan citizenship; in the cities pseudo-administrative structures are being created for those Africans who cannot go to the Bantustans. New and useless structures are being created for Coloureds and Indians with the aim of separating them from their African brothers and sisters and — if possible — winning them over to the side of the white racists.

The militarisation of the economy and social life is an aspect of this crisis. Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and other frontline states are either being daily attacked by the South African racists or are under daily threat of attack: their economies are being eroded. Namibia is in an even worse position, for it is not only colonised by racist South Africa, but is being misused to attack the peace- and freedom-loving people of Angola and other areas in Southern Africa.

On the other hand the racist ideologues are busy looking for new "solutions" to this crisis. They suggest that the best way to solve this problem is to create an African bourgeoisie which will be subservient and subordinate to its white counterpart. In the words of *The Star:*

> "The steady drift towards communism/Marxism/socialism on the part of South Africa's blacks is an ominous one. In the long term it poses a greater threat to peace and prosperity in South Africa than does black nationalism, black consciousness or the black battle for political and economic equality. This trend has been confirmed by three major surveys which show that the majority of urban blacks prefer to call themselves communists, Marxists or socialists rather than capitalists . . .
>
> "What South Africa really needs is concerted action to win blacks to free enterprise capitalism. To do this the Government and the capitalists must change the face of South Africa so that black people can see that capitalism and free enterprise serve them as well as they serve the whites . . .[1]

From the above it becomes obvious that our international responsibility is closely interconnected with our *national mission* whose main essence is the liquidation of the racist fascist regime of Botha. It therefore goes without saying that the theoretical and practical-political questions cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader issues of a social and ideological nature, that is, psychological and above all, class questions. But to make such a contribution more meaningful and fruitful one has to transcend the limits of a general discussion and enter the domain of a detailed and concrete analysis of aspects and specific issues of the national question. This article cannot deal with all these issues — it is meant to be a contribution to the on-going discussion in our movement on the national question and its relationship to ethnic processes.

But before we attempt this, let us hear what Marx, Engels and Lenin had to say on this question and then trace and examine the history and evolution of the debate on this question in our liberation movement.

Marx and Engels

The emergence of scientific communism meant the creation of a foundation on which the working class could base itself in the struggle against capital. Marx and Engels analysed the genesis and character of capitalism; exposed the interconnection between

colonialism and the development of capital in the context of their times and proved the necessity to overthrow capital. They proved that proletarian internationalism is the only answer to imperialism and thus laid a foundation from which they could analyse all aspects of the national question.

Marx and Engels did not separate the national question from the fundamental demands of class struggle; on the contrary, they concluded that the national and colonial question is subordinate to the class question. In their studies on Poland and Ireland — the burning issues of their time — they came to the conclusion that a nation that oppresses others forges its own chains and that national oppression paralyses the internal life of the oppressed nation which has to concentrate all its energies, efforts and strength against the external enemy.

Marx and Engels also discovered the negative effects of colonialism on the colonies and colonised people on one side and on the workers and working class movement of the metropolitan countries on the other: hence they conceived the general line of action for the working class and colonial peoples and laid the theoretical basis for the common struggle of the international working class movement and the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist liberation movement.

Lenin and the National Question

It was Lenin who, living in a period of imperialist exploitation and conflict, was able to realise the need for the unity of the working-class movement and the movements for national liberation. He had made a thorough study of both movements and worked hard for the realisation of this unity.

The Leninist approach to the national question demands a distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. Lenin rejected any formal approach to the national question and demanded a concrete analysis of the objective and subjective factors in each country; a study of the specific features which make this or that country differ from others in the same historical period and a knowledge of the national tasks to be solved at that particular phase of struggle.

In 1919 he taught the communists of the East that the social conditions of economic backwardness under which the colonial

people live enhance "national egoism" and "national narrow-mindedness": hence he advised them to look for new solutions to the concrete and practical tasks in the countries of the East; to be creative and original in the application of communist doctrine and to be able to "find the right approach to the peoples of the East."[2] He saw an "historical justification" for the nationalism of the oppressed and taught that the "perfectly legitimate distrust", prejudice and national sentiment of the oppressed nations should be treated cautiously and with great care so as to rapidly overcome them. The only correct approach to it, Lenin stated, is an internationalist approach and this should be viewed *both from the point of view of the oppressed and oppressor nations.*

This Leninist principle, which became the foundation and cornerstone on which the Soviet state was built and thus made the Soviet Union a trailblazer also on the solution of the national question is fundamental and is of great significance for South Africa.

The significance of the Leninist approach to the national question goes far beyond the national boundaries of an individual country. Any infringement of this principle leads to catastrophic results as the case of China shows "where Maoist policies deny the right of self-determination to non-Hans, accentuating the heritage of inequality between Han and non-Han instead of overcoming it".[3] A cursory glance at the post-colonial history of Africa shows that attempts to minimise the significance of the national question and ethnic factors have disastrous repercussions. Indeed in Africa there is a tendency not to pay sufficient attention to this problem as Ismagilova the Soviet Africanist observes.[4]

The irony about these reactions is that at times they are motivated by genuine aspirations and lofty ideals of "national consolidation", "African unity" and at times even "class consciousness" forgetting that these can only evolve historically in each individual country and that the task confronting progressive Africa — at least from the point of view of the national question — is *not* the abolition of national differences and ethnic diversity but the *acceleration* of their abolition which can only come about through genuine democracy, that is, democracy which exerts its influence on economic life and stimulates its transformation and in turn becomes influenced by economic development.

The Comintern and the National Question in South Africa

The development of a clear theory on the national question in our movement was a contradictory process which was at times accompanied by sharp differences and tremendous diversity, conflicts and even clashes. The intensity of passion with which the discussion was carried on did not always reflect the depth of understanding of the theoretical questions and practical political conclusions to be drawn. Considering the times, size and experience of our movement it is understandable that the path to a proper assessment and realisation of the significance and historical place of the national question in the struggle for freedom and independence was not a smooth one.

The national question in South Africa has always been interrelated with the class question. The simultaneous emergence of the national liberation movement and working-class organisations at the end of the 19th century reflected this reality. But the realisation of this reality by these liberation forces took some decades.

The formation of the African National Congress in 1912 and the International Socialist League in 1915 were historic events, events that laid a basis for an elaboration of the national question in South Africa. The two organisations had differing approaches to and views on this question. Expressing the predominant views prevalent in African nationalist circles Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the co-founder of the ANC, formulated his ideas as follows:

> "The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basuto and every other Native must be buried and forgotten . . .
>
> "We are one people. These diversions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes and of all our backwardness and ignorance today."[5]

For the ANC unity was indivisible from freedom from national oppression. It is true that the ANC tended to emphasise the national aspect and overlook the class character of the national question.

The International Socialist League on the other hand saw the matter somewhat differently:

> "Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu or Shangaan. You are all labourers. Let labour be your common bond. Deliver yourself from the chains of capitalism".[6]

A closer study shows clearly that the difference in approach of the two standpoints was more than just "two sides of the same coin": The International Socialist League stressed the class aspect and underestimated the national question. From different premises and points of departure both organisations appealed for *African unity* and urged the Africans to "forget" ethnic differences. This was correct. But equally important was to state that racial conflicts and "tribal" animosities are caused by the system and that only under conditions of independence and socialism can the national and ethnic characteristics be fully satisfied. This was not done consistently. (According to Soviet scientists "by ethnic processes in the broader sense of the term shall be understood processes of change in all the main elements of the ethnic community, i.e., in language, culture etc. and first and foremost in those of them which are specific to the particular ethnic community in question or which serve its members as distinctive symbols and indices of ethnic identity".[7])

We point out these differences and shortcomings not to deny the fact that there were joint actions and points of mutual understanding between the ANC and ISL. Our immediate concern is to drive home the point that the process of understanding the national question in our country took our movement some time; the reason being the fact that the socio-economic structure of the African society was (and remains) distorted and hence the political and social forces — which were still weak at the time — could not grasp the national question in its totality. In other words the reasons were historically determined and were also due to the complexity of the situation which we today characterise as "colonialism of a special type".

These two differing views or rather points of departure lasted in our movement for a decade or so until 1928 when a lively discussion broke out on this topic. The discussion took the form of a struggle for the acceptance and correct interpretation of the "Black Republic" slogan which was adopted by the Comintern at its 6th Congress in Moscow in 1928.

Jack and Ray Simons have made the significant observation that the insight into the national aspect of our struggle was given an impetus and a new dimension by the Brussels Conference of the League Against Imperialism in 1927 whose resolution incorporated the concept of the "Black Republic".[8] However, the authors'

interpretation of the resolution tends to underestimate its revolutionary essence: they add that "this involved no more than parliamentary reform of the kind introduced into western Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century".[9] This assessment cannot be acceptable for the simple reason that the "Resolution on South Africa" adopted by the Brussels Conference actually demanded a "complete overthrow of capitalist and imperialist domination" in that country.[10]

The 6th Congress of the Comintern decided that the struggle in South Africa should be waged under the slogan of:

> "The Independent Native Republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic, with full, equal rights for all races."[11]

The Comintern's decision was based on the assessment that "the national question in South Africa, which is based upon the agrarian question lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa."[12]

La Guma and Gumede did their best to spread these ideas in our movement, but their successes were partial. This led to stormy debate and serious errors which were partly caused by an underestimation of the dynamism of the African society; its *change* in social composition, that is, the increasing role of the African workers and the effects of this process on the social composition of our movement. There were also nihilistic and pragmatic approaches to the national question; problems of political and ideological eclecticism, over-simplification of complicated processes and, last but not least, attempts to apply mechanically Stalin's definition of a nation to South African conditions.

What were the trends of reaction to this problem? The moderates within the ANC reacted violently and ousted the militant Gumede-Khaile leadership and this led to a "lull" in our movement for almost a decade. In the Communist Party there were three main trends of reaction to this slogan, the first being the tendency to underplay the national question and "reduce" it to a trade union affair: black and white workers must unite. The rejection of the slogan of the "Black Republic" meant the continuation of the policy of orientation towards socialism as the immediate goal in South Africa — a legacy which had been inherited from the old days of the International Socialist League. There was also a sectarian trend which regarded

the participation of the white workers in the struggle against imperialism, racism and colonialism in South Africa as of "secondary importance", maintaining that unity between black and white workers "will be realised after the proletarian revolution in South Africa" thus identifying the slogan of the "Black Republic" with the socialist revolution in South Africa and overlooking the different stages of the South African revolution. It is true that the question of assessment of the treacherous role of the white workers in South Africa was central in the heated discussions on the "Black Republic" slogan and was not only limited to this sectarian group but this did not mean their a priori exclusion from the struggle.[13]

Moses Kotane, the outspoken protagonist of the line which correctly interpreted the slogan of the "Black Republic" in the context of the South African situation, fought against this sectarian group when he wrote in 1934 that the "Black Republic" has different premises, language and attitudes to that of the socialist revolution and the "identification of the two historical stages is nothing but rank opportunism."[14]

The knowledge of this history is important for two reasons: we should know the past from which we have emerged so as to continue the correct line of approach. Secondly, it is necessary to put the record straight so as to save our glorious history from the distortions (mostly politically motivated) to which it has been (and continues to be) subjected.

The problems which our movement faced were partly solved thanks to the advice and assistance rendered our movement by the international working-class movement whose organisational centre at that time was the Comintern. The Comintern taught the CP of South Africa and through it our whole movement that the Marxist theory of a nation, which is based upon dialectical and historical materialism, considers a nation as an historical category characterised by socio-economic, cultural, psychological and linguistic factors that are subordinate to the class question and *struggle* of classes and oppressed people against their class enemies and oppressors.

In short, the "Black Republic" slogan put in proper perspective the relationship between African nationalism and proletarian internationalism by bringing the point home that class struggle in South Africa should incorporate the principle of national self-

determination for the Africans and other nationally oppressed blacks. In practical terms this meant that, for a revolutionary party, it is not enough to declare and adhere to the principles and concepts of proletarian internationalism, but that such a party should be international in its physical composition and leadership organs without losing sight of the actual historical realities of a country where the most oppressed African majority is the leading force fighting for national liberation as its immediate goal.

The African Claims

We have already remarked that a section of our movement rejected the idea of a "Black Republic" and all that it entailed. This resulted in a situation where a large portion of our movement could not participate directly in the discussions that ensued until it became necessary that some changes in the leadership, strategies and tactics be introduced. This trend started in the late 30's and became dominant in the 40's. The formation of the ANC Youth League in 1944 and the adoption of the *African Claims* and *Bill of Rights* by the annual conference of the ANC at Bloemfontein on December 16 1945 were important milestones in this direction.

The African Claims and Bill of Rights were drafted by a committee of 28 people whose task was to analyse the "Atlantic Charter from the African's point of view." The membership of this committee was broad-based and included people from different walks of life, political and ideological inclinations and religious beliefs such as Drs Xuma, Bokwe, Moroka, Molema; workers' and peasants' leaders: Kotane, Makabeni, Mofutsanyane, Mbeki; religious leaders: Calata, Mahabane, Mpitso, Mtimkulu and many others. Dr Xuma, the President-General of the ANC and Secretary-Organiser of the Atlantic Charter Committee, hit the nail on the head when he wrote in the preface of the *African Claims:*

> "The list of names of the members of the committee who produced this document tells a story for those who would understand. These fruits of their labours are a legacy, nay a heritage which they will leave behind for future generations to enjoy. For it, and to them, we are all forever indebted . . . We realise that for the African this is only a beginning of a long struggle entailing great sacrifices of time, means and even life itself. To the African people the declaration is a challenge to organise and unite

themselves under the mass liberation movement, the African National Congress. The struggle is on right now and it must be persistent and insistent. . . there is no room for diversions or for personal ambitions. The goal is one, namely, freedom for all. It should be the central and only aim or objective of all true African nationals. Divisions and gratification of personal ambitions under the circumstances will be a betrayal of this great cause."[15]

The *African Claims* was an attempt to counteract the imperialist demagogy which surrounded the discussions on the Atlantic Charter. The Africans were interested in giving content to terms like "nations", "states", "men" and "peoples" which were loosely used during the war and were intended to exclude Africans and other colonially oppressed people.

It is impossible to deal with all the points raised by this important document. We shall confine ourselves to one point: the principle of self-determination. The document states:

"Africans are still very conscious of the loss of their independence, freedom and the right of choosing the form of government under which they will live."[16]

The Atlantic Charter correctly points out that the principle of self-determination cannot be reduced to a question of "diplomacy" but should take into account the rights and status of different nationalities and minorities within a given country and the *inalienable right* of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live. In other words the principle of self-determination is inherently anti-colonial and incorporates a demand for independence from colonial rule and any form of national oppression. This is all in the *African Claims* and *Bill of Rights*.

The *African Claims* had also serious weaknesses. Unlike the "Black Republic" slogan which was based on historical and dialectical materialism, the Atlantic Charter was based on the FOURTEEN POINTS made by the American President Wilson in 1918. The question of destruction of the state apparatus and its replacement by a new order was not raised. On the contrary the *African Claims* demanded "full citizenship rights and direct participation in all councils of state" by Africans in South Africa. Considering the times, conditions, state of organisation and political consciousness it is understandable why the question of destruction of the system and its

replacement by a new order could not be raised at that time. We mention this to point out that compared with the demand for a "Black Republic", the *African Claims* fell short of expectation.

The concepts and ideas in the ANC about the principle of self-determination developed and were concretised in the 1949 *Programme of Action.*

The right of self-determination (independence, "majority rule" etc.) was propounded, among other people, by Lenin who emphasised that this right "implies the right to independence in the political sense", that is, the right of an oppressed nation to free itself *politically* from an oppressor nation. "This demand", Lenin said, "therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of the struggle against all national oppression."[17]

In the '50's a lively discussion on the national question was revived by Lionel Forman, Jack Simons and others. It is not our task to review their ideas — that will need a separate study. It is enough to recall that their endeavours coincided with, or emanated from, a realisation by the movement that we have to address ourselves to this problem — hence the adoption of the Freedom Charter which did provide a basis for the solution of the national question in South Africa.

The ideas embodied in the Freedom Charter were given a new dimension by the adoption of *The Road to South African Freedom* — the programme of the South African Communist Party — in 1962 which characterised South Africa as a "colony of a special type" and went further to identify the forces of revolution and suggested the forms of struggle which included armed struggle. Its significance lies in the fact that it took into consideration the new mood of the people, their experience and anger, and generalised them in the context of the African revolution and world revolutionary process.

Seven years later the ANC adopted the now famous *Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress,* a document which is superior in many ways to the previous documents of the liberation movement. It states clearly;

> "The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group — the African people."[18]

And repeats for the sake of emphasis

> "The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach."

This document also emphasises the central role of the working class in our struggle and this is in conformity with the anti-monopoly demands of the Freedom Charter. It has been said that the anti-monopoly character of the Freedom Charter "expresses the deep underlying anti-capitalist sentiments of our people"[19] and this explains the interest our workers and their organisation SACTU show in this programme of the liberation movement. It is therefore correct to emphasise that our anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle at this stage encompasses the destruction of the grip of monopoly capitalism in South Africa and that our country "must come out of the imperialist camp and join the community of freedom and peace-loving peoples of the world."[20]

Ethnic problems

In South Africa the process of obliterating and annihilating African civilisation and culture has been so intense that what has remained of the glorious African past is its shadow and ghost. Even the process of "detribalisation" and the breakdown of the "tribal" structure with the resultant diminishing significance of "blood ties" and "blood relations" could not progress fully because it was deliberately hindered by conditions and laws. The African was stripped of his national identity and dehumanised. This sometimes led to frustration and despair. It is those factors that lie at the root of "tribal clashes" in South Africa because "tribalism" is not just a relic of the past but a reality of today. What is "tribalism"? This usually refers to "tribal loyalty", that is, a tendency to stress loyalty to one's language and cultural group above loyalty to the cause of the nation-in-the-making or class and is accompanied by animosity towards "other tribes" and often leads to "tribal clashes".

What is the solution? The solution to this question is vital for every genuine revolutionary movement in Africa because these are the troubled waters in which reactionary forces usually fish. We need to liberate the concept of a nation from the two evils which have plagued Africa for too long, namely racism and "tribalism," and one of the methods is to emphasise that our struggle is not only directed

against the imperialist system of colonialism and racism but also against the survivals of the outmoded remnants of the precolonial past. But this does not mean we should undermine the *ethnic factor* because: "While ethnic communities exist, ethnic interests exist too."[21]

This means we should pay more attention to ethnic processes now taking place in our country. *It is not enough to say "tribalism is reactionary,"* a positive strategy is necessary, a strategy that will link this problem with the broader issues of the national question such as the normalisation of relations between "tribes"; the preservation of and respect for their cultural heritage and their precious treasures such as the languages. A *democratic solution* to the extremely difficult language question, especially the problem of rendering "foreign concepts" ie scientific language into African languages, will depend on a harmonised development of *all* the ethnic groups. The significance of this question can only be properly grasped when one takes into account the fact that the people who inhabit these "tribal areas" — the peasants — are not only a revolutionary force but also carriers of tradition whose positive elements have to be developed.

The peasant question features prominently in the Freedom Charter which sees the realisation of the agrarian reform in the interests of the poor peasants as a step towards its solution.

The successful solution of these questions will depend on how consistently we apply Lenin's thesis of the "two historical tendencies in the national question", that is, advocacy of equality of nations, nationalities, ethnic groups, languages etc. and impermissibility of all privileges in this respect on one side and advocacy of integration, proletarian internationalism and uncompromising struggle against all kinds of bourgeois solution of the national question on the other.

With regard to "impermissibility of all privileges in this respect" the question arises: how do we bridge the gap between blacks and whites?

According to the ANC the solution to this question entails the destruction of the present system and then

> ". . . the raising of the living standard of the black majority to that of the whites and then the general improvement and development in material life and cultural welfare of all people irrespective of race, colour or creed to an extent hitherto unknown in South Africa."[22]

In other words, as far as the national question is concerned, we are concentrating on the development of the most oppressed and raising their level to that of the 'privileged' national groups. This is an all round process affecting every aspect of our work.

This is not something invented by our movement. As early as the beginning of this century Lenin stressed that the only correct approach to the national question is an internationalist approach which must be viewed both from the point of view of the oppressed and oppressor nations.

Internationalism

From the point of view of the oppressed nations the task is to propagate internationalism and the oppressed revolutionaries should extend a hand of friendship and brotherhood to the revolutionaries of all nationalities including those belonging to the oppressor nation. From the point of view of oppressor nations or "great" nations — which are great only in their violence and as bullies — internationalism

> "must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in inequality of the oppressor nation, the greater nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual fact."

In other words this means that after (or before) national liberation of the oppressed people, the oppressor nation must "compensate" the oppressed nation for the lack of trust, suspicion and daily insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past:

> "Anyone who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view."[23]

In South Africa this is more relevant not only because, as one comrade put it:

> "history has given the Africans the mission of leading the South African revolution . . . their national liberation (or their struggle for an independent stage) is a precondition for the social and later socialist revolution in South Africa"

but also because — and this is very important for the further advancement of class struggle in our country —

> "after national liberation of the blacks, the question of class and social emancipation of all South Africans, irrespective of race, will come to the forefront more sharply than now."[24]

This coincides with Lenin's thinking on this subject. He said:

> "To throw off the feudal yoke, all national oppression, and all privileges enjoyed by any particular nation or language, is the imperative duty of the proletariat as a democratic force and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question".[25]

Are we "bickering on the national question"? Certainly not. But such forces as the PAC, Gang of 8, *Ikwezi* and others are definitely "bickering on the national question" and therefore "obscuring and retarding" the proletarian class struggle in South Africa.

Acute Problem

The national question is one of the most acute problems facing our movement now and also in the future. This brings us to the question of a future form of state structure in our country. It is definitely not enough to say we are fighting for a "unitary state" because a "federal state" like the Soviet Union is not an opposite of a "unitary state". We have to go beyond this and analyse the form of state structure best suited for our conditions and which will therefore be a proper instrument to solve the complex national question.

But even before we start on that we have to clarify our minds on the essence and character of the national question and this means we have to discard meaningless conclusions such as:

> "in South Africa we have a nation, one people united by their economic interdependence, but divided by the racist policies of the apartheid regime"[26]

because the identification of a nation with "people united by their economic interdependence" — whatever that means — is an over-simplification of complicated processes which go far deeper than just the division created by the racist policies of the apartheid regime. What we can say with certainty is that the correct policy of our

movement on the national question does not 'dilute' the class struggle, social content and character of the revolution. On the contrary, consistency on this question enhances the class struggle.

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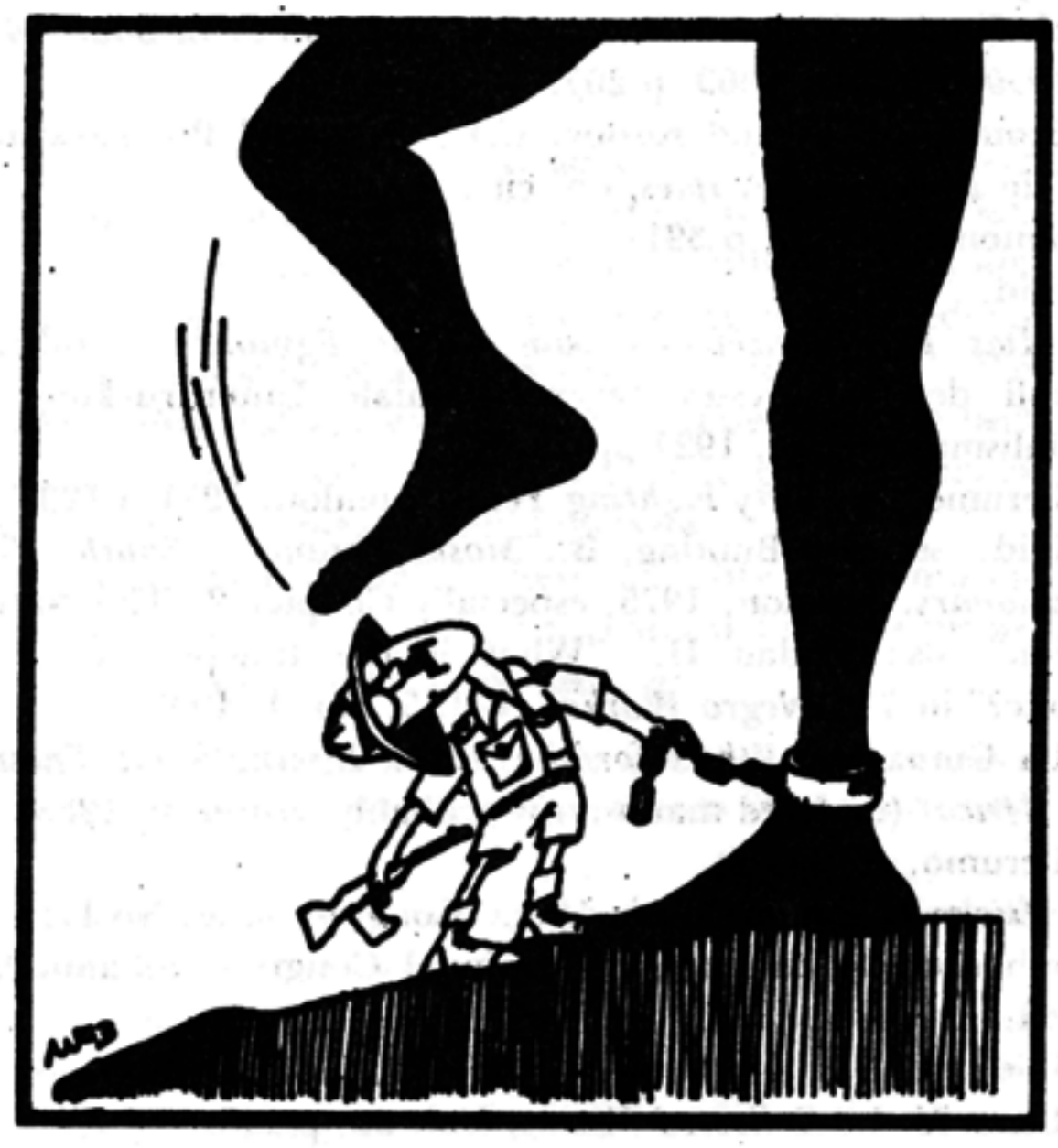

BUILDING THE PARTY IN MOZAMBIQUE

by Spectator

At one level there is nothing particular about the way the Party is being built in Mozambique. It is being based on the working class and organised peasantry, its ideology is clearly Marxist-Leninist and the basic principle of organisation is democratic centralism.[1] In this sense it shares the processes of development of all communist and workers' parties throughout the world, and conforms to the general laws of revolutionary advance applicable in any part of the globe. Indeed this is one of the points continually driven home here against those who wish to detach the Mozambican revolution from the world revolution, to isolate Mozambique from what it calls the liberated zone of humanity, as though it could be a liberated zone all on its own.

'We must always be on guard', President Samora Machel said recently 'against chauvinist deviation of the so-called "specific socialism" type. We regret the idea that there can be an "African socialism" or a "Mozambican socialism". We firmly and deliberately

declare that there can only be one kind of socialism, namely scientific socialism'.[2]

But in another sense the new vanguard Marxist-Leninist party is clearly a product of Mozambican history, of the ancient and contemporary struggle of the working people in this part of the world against oppression, and to that extent it has its own stamp, and watching it being built has been a source of absorbing interest to those of us with experience of struggle elsewhere in southern Africa.

This is a land of meetings. There are meetings at work, after work, over week-ends. A cartoon showed Xiconhoca the Enemy lazing in his bed, with bottles of liquor and his shortwave radio around him, reading his newspaper and declaring: 'Seminars, discussions, conferences — doesn't anyone *work* around here?'

In a country where colonialism left the mass of the people illiterate and without radios, meetings became one of the main means of communicating information. But their role is much more — they inculcate habits of collective discussion, of organisation, of discipline, of making people feel responsible for solving their own problems. At one stage there were so many meetings that a special ruling had to be made: meetings normally to last only two hours, no smoking, an agenda to be presented in advance if possible. The Party-building campaign, which lasted officially from February to November 1978, and then continued in particular sectors until this year, produced a large quota of meetings, meetings generally carefully thought about and prepared so as to involve the people as actively as possible in the whole process. The strength of the meetings was that they encouraged the people to think very concretely about what it meant to have a Party and what the qualities of a Party member should be. Wider questions will no doubt be thought about by readers of this journal, but this article will concentrate on the concrete kinds of discussion and debate that took place here.

1. PROBLEMS OF RELIGION, TRADITION, POLITICAL PRISONERS AND SEX.

There are many Catholics in Mozambique, and also a large number of Moslems in the north. The cathedrals and mosques are open, believers have government permission to be absent from work on religious holidays and religious bodies retain international

contacts. The only known repression has been of a millenarian prophet who was leading processions in the shanty-towns of Maputo and who refused to desist.

The Constitution enshrines three basic principles with regard to religion: freedom of conscience, total separation of church and state, and subordination of the church to the general laws of the land. Everyday life seems to conform to these principles. Christians and Moslems can walk freely in the streets, practice their religion openly, organise themselves into religious communities, and pray without interference to their respective deities.

But the rights of members of FRELIMO are not the same as the rights of citizens. Joining FRELIMO is a voluntary act by those who share its principles. It is not a passport to privilege or office, a necessity for holding down a job. FRELIMO believes in scientific socialism and fights against all sorts of mental backwardness and superstition. As a vanguard party it represents the future, its ideological outlook is in advance of the majority of citizens, its role is exemplary and educative.

At first the indications were that believers would not be allowed to join FRELIMO. Belief in an Almighty controlling the destinies of man was seen as inconsistent with belonging to a revolutionary party dedicated to making man master of his own destiny. But in the course of the campaign, the matter was further developed. As was explained to us at one of the meetings, the real issue was not one of philosophical belief but of practice. A distinction had to be made between someone who quietly practised the tenets of his religion on the one hand, and a person who was an active part of a religious structure on the other. The former was not debarred by his belief in God from belonging to FRELIMO , whereas the latter was. He gave the example of somebody going from door to door collecting funds for the church, whose first loyalty was to the church and not to the Party — such a person could not become a Party member.

Obscurantism

At the closure of the campaign it became clear that the church hierarchy had not been accepting the restriction on its public activities imposed by the constitution. At a large public ceremony attended by thousands in the centre of Maputo, the President

summed up the results of the campaign and twice referred to the role of the church and religion.[3]

The Party would unmask the true content of religion and all other forms of obscurantism, he said. The role of the church was to divide the people. 'I am from the church of Rome, that man over there is from the church of Mecca, the other one from the church of England or America. Some had their headquarters in Rhodesia, some in South Africa, some in the Federal Republic of Germany . . . Our faith went to Rome, to Mecca, to England, it never stayed here in Mozambique to fight against colonialism'.

The people defeated colonialism — he added — when they had exchanged belief in God for belief in their own capacity, the cross for the gun. The cross had never been a weapon of the people, always of the enemy, blessing his instruments of punishment, his cannons and his aeroplanes.

'Believers are people, they are workers. We can argue with them about belief, but this is secondary. What matters is that as people, as workers, we know how to unite with them and work towards solving the concrete problems of the day, of food, clothing, schools and hospitals. It is this that must unite us'.

Later he declared that the enemy had used certain religious institutions as a means of attacking the Party, something not surprising, since the forces of obscurantism and superstition preferred the darkness to the light of scientific ideology of the workers so that they could the better carry on exploiting the people.

'We went to a meeting of a union of religious bodies. Rival churches and religions and sections who had fought amongst themselves as to who had the better god or offered the better paradise, joined forces in a common strategy. We may well ask: how is it they never came together to fight against colonialism? Because, they were all of them allies of colonialism. Their contradiction was not with colonialism but with the freedom of the peoples'.

At about that time, the press reported that Sergio Vieira, member of the Central Committee and Governor of the Bank of Mozambique, had had an extensive meeting with a group of religious leaders. More recently, it has carried a full critique of the role of the Catholic Church in Mozambique, both during the period of colonialism and now.[4] The main points were that a church which had

always backed colonialism in its most vicious forms, refusing to condemn massacres testified to by their own members and padres, a church that had voluntarily withdrawn from the liberated zones, that had blessed the colonial military and secret service machine, such a church had no moral claim suddenly to act as defenders of human rights in Mozambique; similarly, a church that had never protested when one of its buildings of worship had been used as a brothel, so that when FRELIMO entered the town it found anti-V.D. posters still sticking to the walls at the entrance, could hardly claim to be the true defender of church property against profanation today.

At the time of independence, the article continued, there had been a sudden promotion of black bishops, but a change in the colour of the skin had not changed the character of the thinking. Some of the new bishops extolled a racial consciousness that had nothing to do with the new morality of Mozambique — they had been pleased to see foreign padres from Italy and Spain go, even though the latter had fought for the rights of the people in a way they themselves had never done.

Later the President added that before FRELIMO, these persons had been eating in the kitchen, now they were bishops, thanks not to their own struggles, but to that of FRELIMO. The true rebels had been expelled from the seminaries, some even tortured and killed, and the most subservient ones were suddenly made bishops when victory arrived, making up for their cowardice under colonialism by now asserting their blackness against progressive whites within the church.[5]

More recently, the article continued, pastoral letters were issued which repeated the lies of the racist Rhodesian regime, that the Patriotic Front had been responsible for the murder of missionaries, when it was well known that the racists themselves had committed the murders. Similarly, there were frequent attacks on Mozambique's national allies, the socialist states, and finally, attacks on FRELIMO itself, alleging that the organisation's godless vision of mankind turned people into mere machines.

The concrete result of this critique by FRELIMO was a set of norms for the Catholic church which reaffirmed its right to organise worship, but emphasised its need to comply with the ordinary law of the land, with regard to such matters as entry and exit permits,

building permission, and the use of commodities in short supply such as paper and cement.

In the meantime it is being said that as a mark of respect for one of the bishops who had sided with the people during the colonial period and who was now ill, the President had sent a special plane to help with his transport to hospital. And as far as the Party is concerned, it is likely that a certain number of its members are believing Christians and Moslems, whose faith in no way interferes with their active and loyal work in FRELIMO, and who will be judged by their general behaviour and activity in the same way as any other members.

Frelimo and Traditional African Customs

Here too specific orientations were given, and here too there were some modifications in the light of practical experience. FRELIMO has been unique in Africa in the extent to which it has challenged what it calls traditional feudalism. On the one hand it strongly promotes pride in the culture of the people, in the songs called 'primitive' and the dances 'savage', just as it constantly recalls their age-long suffering and resistance.[6] On the other hand it firmly condemns what it calls the reactionary and exploitative heritage of the past, especially the power of the chiefs and the subordination of women and the young, just as it attacks the obscurantist world view that went with a technologically backward and class-ridden society.

Like so many questions here, the issue first cropped up in a practical form when during the armed struggle militants such as Josina Machel sought to join the Army. The reactionaries in FRELIMO bitterly opposed the idea, saying that women could not fight and that in any event the people would be shocked. The revolutionaries won the issue, and the Women's Detachment was formed, which to this day has proved itself one of the most determined sectors of the women's movement. Now women drive tractors, direct traffic, unload ships, repair motor cars and play football. The constitution in fact imposes a duty on the state to help realise the liberation of women, and the Organisation of Mozambican Women has an active and honoured position in Mozambican life.

And yet, traditional feudal and modern colonial capitalist ideas still lie heavily on the people. The struggle for the soul of the

Mozambicans rages over a multiplicity of concrete things. A thirteen year old girl fails to turn up to school — the teacher discovers she has been given in marriage by her parents to someone who they claim is a good hard-working man who will care for her well. A man criticises his wife because she does not know how to make love like the women who have been through initiation schools; or he says she is only going to literacy classes in order to meet other men. Two students decide to marry without lobola — her parents insist she leave the University to work so as to make up for the money they have spent on her. Girls with straightened hair and platform shoes stand in the queue next to boys with tight fitting trousers and large belts, all waiting to register for their national service.

The Party stems from the people, and represents their aspirations. The President was a hospital nurse, and when discussing the continuing problem of queues today, he can speak movingly of his experiences as a child when he had been sent to buy third-class meat, half putrid, off stinking barrows in side streets, and never had to queue. The Governor of one of the major provinces was a former mineworker in South Africa, while another had been forced to shine shoes in order to survive.

But the Party does not limit itself to articulating what the people feel, it is an agent of transformation. It was FRELIMO and the struggle itself that transformed the consciousness of the present leadership, that produced thousands of cadres at all levels with a new mentality. FRELIMO has to embody all that is new, all that is progressive in Mozambique society. Its members must not only be representative of the working people, they must be exemplary. This requires them to reject feudal and reactionary ideas, rather than attempt to smuggle them into the party, or hope they will simply disappear with time.

Polygamy: this is regarded as an oppressive insitution that relegates women to the position of labour exploitation and instruments of sensual pleasure.[7] In some areas where the practice was strong, however, there were people in all other respects good militants, with more than one wife, people who had fought in the armed struggle and had continued to work loyally thereafter. What could they do? Simply to repudiate one wife would add to the injustice, not lessen it. When the Party-building campaign started, the indications were that anyone who had contracted a second

marriage after independence in 1975 would be automatically barred from membership, but later this was amended to the date of the holding of the Third Congress of FRELIMO in early 1977, on the basis that everyone by then had been familiarised by public campaigns with the FRELIMO attitude to polygamy.

Lobola: The author of the Organisation of Mozambican Women lists lobola as one of the principal obstacles to women's liberation. The custom varies from one part of the country to another, but basically it involves the payment of goods or rendering of service by the groom to the parents of the bride in consideration for their daughter passing from her family to his. FRELIMO has strongly condemned lobola because of its psychological effect on wives, who feel they 'belong' to their husbands, but the practice continues tenaciously in other forms — the grooms, for example give 'presents' calculated on the same basis as lobola. The attitude of FRELIMO is that no one married with lobola at any time after the Third Congress could be a member of the Party.

So, polygamy is not a crime, nor is the giving or receiving of lobola. They are frowned upon as reactionary and oppressive practices, to be patiently overcome by persuasion and example rather than by prison or fines. But they are regarded as important indicators of consciousness and of the degree to which individuals are liberated from the negative aspects of the past. Thus they act as absolute barriers to joining the Party if practised recently, and factors to be taken into account if of older date.

Former Chiefs and Indunas

In the past there were great kingdoms in Mozambique — Monomatapa, Zimbabwe, Gaza. But they are not today glorified as proof of a great African past. On the contrary, the excellently produced FRELIMO history texts declare that these states arose with the division of the people into classes, that the kings and chiefs belonged to an increasingly decadent feudal ruling class, and that the purpose of the state was to institutionalise and protect the exploitation of man by man.[8] The feudal chiefs and priests exacted tribute from the farming and artisan families, as well as controlling trade between the coast and the interior. In this perspective, class struggle was not something invented in Europe, a reflection of

'foreign ideology'; it existed in Africa before colonialism, was intensified by colonialism, and played its part in the struggle for national liberation.

This view of history was not the product of debate between academics, but arose out of fierce struggle inside FRELIMO itself in the crisis years 1968-1970, when a group of reactionaries in the leadership, ambitious to become new exploiters themselves, argued that to raise class questions would divide the African people and weaken the struggle. Some of the reactionaries lined up with the chiefs in the liberated zone in an attempt to create personal power bases for themselves. As a result the revolutionaries were forced to confront not only tribalism but the chiefs themselves.

Today the chiefs are stripped of all their powers. They can work and move freely, but have no political rights at all, neither the feudal or colonial powers of before, nor the rights enjoyed by the working people today. The chiefs collected taxes, supervised forced labour, acted as informers, handed the people over for punishment, and on their own account acted as oppressors and exploiters. Today people's democratic power is used against them — they have no vote, cannot be elected to the Popular Assemblies or become judges, and cannot join the Party. The institutions through which they expressed their power have also disappeared, in particular their courts and the courts of elders, replaced first by social affairs committees of FRELIMO, and now by elected Popular Tribunals.

Ex-members of the Security Police, the Fascist Organisations and the Army

Naturally, ex-members of the P.I.D.E., the vicious fascist police force trained virtually by the Gestapo, cannot join the Party. But what of the hundreds and hundreds of part-time agents and informers whom they planted or recuited in every living area or work-place? They too cannot join. Neither can persons who belonged to the fascist political organisations, nor persons who joined the commandos or other special military units guilty of massacres and *other crimes against the people. But ordinary conscripts in the* colonial army are not excluded. There was compulsory military service for certain sections of the population, mainly young whites, and compliance with this is not a barrier to joining FRELIMO. In

fact, during the closing period of the war especially, a number of conscripts quietly sabotaged the war effort, and today many of this group occupy important positions in the public service and the economy.

In the general election of 1977 people belonging to the excluded categories mentioned above were urged to present themselves at public meetings and make a full and honest exposure of their past as the first step towards their re-integration into Mozambican society. A large number did so, but many did not. As a result, at the closure of the Party Building Campaign, the President announced that lists of all such persons were to be posted at their places of work and residence.

The objective was twofold: first to permit supervision by the people of all such compromised individuals; secondly to enable each such individual to liberate himself or herself from the compromise.[9] So, starting in the ministries and spreading to all major places of employment in the country, boards went up with photographs and short statements signed by the persons concerned setting out the extent of their involvement with the repressive organs of the past. For weeks you could see people gathered round in knots in various hallways reading fascinated. An important practical consequence was the elimination of the threat of blackmail by BOSS or ex-PIDE agents of persons known by them to have worked for the fascists and now in a position to pick up information at work. Looking at the photographs, it becomes clear that the colonial-fascist apparatus was extensive and that treachery and ambition knew no frontier of colour or class, one practical demonstration of why FRELIMO today places such emphasis on questions of consciousness rather than race.

The Difficult Position of Ex-Political Prisoners

About two months after the campaign began, a week-long meeting was arranged between about 350 ex-political prisoners and a number of leading members of the Government. The sessions lasted sometimes into the night, and clearly were occasions for the expression of intense and long-suppressed feelings. From documents and broadcasts issued at a later stage it emerged that the objective of the meetings was to resolve once and for all the ambiguities that had arisen in connection with ex-political prisoners.

For some, the title was one of honour, for others of disgrace. Some of them had compromised with the enemy, others had begun to argue that the revolution had left them behind, that their talents and contribution were not being recognised by the 'hard-liners' in FRELIMO. In characteristic style the meetings were oriented by FRELIMO leaders and most of the talking was done by the ex-prisoners themselves. Many were from the southern parts of Mozambique, some of the first members of the urban underground, picked up by the PIDE in the early 1960's and imprisoned for several years thereafter. There were men and women, a number of them now quite old, a leading poet, the country's best-known painter, black, white and brown.

From what the ex-prisoners themselves said, it emerged that they fell into three distinct groups. The first were the true heroes, who resisted all the pressures and temptations. Many had died, but some were represented at the meeting, and were now working quietly in factories and elsewhere. The next, and much larger group, consisted of those who had made a number of compromises with the enemy without becoming full traitors. They had allowed themselves to be photographed with prison governors, contributed to a prison newspaper used by the enemy for propaganda purposes, and accepted various privileges as a reward for ceasing total resistance.

The PIDE worked hard to 'recuperate' these prisoners — psychological warfare clearly played a bigger role than it does in South Africa. One prisoner poignantly told of the first step his group had taken on the road to compromise. After two years of terrible privations, including hunger, violence and isolation, they had seen one of their group lying in their midst. His body trembled and shook, and warders said that if the others abandoned their stand of total non-collaboration, he would be properly fed and given medical treatment. After much discussion, to save their comrade they agreed, and so took the wrong step.

The third group were the real traitors, who not only collaborated with the authorities, but became informers, leading the PIDE to some of the most courageous militants. At the meeting about half a dozen of this group were exposed and denounced by their ex-prisoners who had watched them going unpunished all those years, sometimes even seen them claiming that they had been the true

heroes.

Why, the President asked, did so many of the prisoners give way to the PIDE? There were two reasons: firstly Mozambique did not have what he called a culture of resistance, that is, years of political preparation for how to behave on capture. Secondly, the resistance in the south had been relatively isolated from the liberated zones in the north, so that the militants in Lourenco Marques and elsewhere had not gone through the transformations experienced by their comrades in the liberated zones.

Far from the revolutionary centre, possessing the consciousness only of nationalists and not of revolutionaries, they had neither the required depth of conviction nor the habit of collective work, to enable them to resist their brutal and skilful captors. The object of the meeting, the President continued, was to honour the heroes, expose and punish the traitors, and enable the many persons who had shown weakness to speak honestly about their behaviour and lift the heavy weight that had been lying on their shoulders all these years.

After the meeting, the handful of traitors were arrested, and all the others went to a centre some distance from Maputo for political-military training, before being fully re-integrated into the community. The way was now open for getting rid of the distinction between ex-political prisoners and other militants of the struggle, and for enabling those of proved worth to be candidates for the Party just like anyone else.

Personal Relations and Sex

About half way through the campaign the daily newspaper carried a front-page article on the question of why it was taking so long for candidates already approved by their fellow workers to be formally accepted into the Party. The article pointed out that approval by meetings of fellow workers was a crucial step, but not the only one. The next stage was investigation by the dynamising group in the area where the candidate lived. This was important to get a full picture of the character and political consciousness of the candidate. Thus a man might be an excellent worker and a model of good behaviour in his factory, but if on getting home he drank excessively or maltreated his wife and children, he was not fit to be a member of the Party. Similarly, a woman might be exemplary at work, yet always be

fighting with her neighbours and creating so much tension in the neighbourhood as to be unfit to join the Party.

No separation could be made between work and home, one part of a person's life and another. A Party member was a Party member all the time, and had to be respected as such, by all those in contact with him or her. Experience has shown that in the long run, behaviour was indivisible — a lack of consciousness at home or in the community invariably reflected itself in some way at work as well. Investigation of these matters, the paper continued, necessarily took time, since many people had to be spoken to to get a full picture.

The question of comportamento (behaviour) plays a significant role in Mozambican life. When the Minister of Agriculture was replaced last year, one of the factors that led to his removal was what the Central Committee regarded as his bourgeois values and misconceptions about the liberation of women. The origin of this interest in life style and personal behaviour goes back, like so much else here, to the fierce struggles inside FRELIMO in the late 1960's. The formation of the Women's Detachment posed very concrete problems about the relationship between sex and comradeship and the struggle.

When a number of the soldiers became pregnant, the reactionaries regarded this as further proof that they had been right to oppose having women in the army, that where there were women, there was trouble. The revolutionaries took a different line: the trouble basically came from the corruptness of the male instructors, who abused their positions to get sexual favours. From then on, all sexual relationships had to be within the context of recognised unions, otherwise the struggle could be set back. Having laid down this principle for the Army, the FRELIMO leaders felt bound to apply the same principles to themselves. The fight against sexual corruption has since been extended to all public institutions, so as to combat abuse of power by men who happen to be in positions of authority over women, such as department heads over secretaries, and teachers over schoolgirls.

A second strand in the formation of FRELIMO attitudes to sex has been the struggle to overcome the massively organised prostitution and pleasure-seeking that characterised the last years of colonialism. Lourenco Marques, for example, was a haven for foreign sailors, a

centre for racist South African tourists and a garrison city for the colonial army. In all three cases, the search for prostitutes degraded the women as women, as Mozambicans and as Africans, and FRELIMO acted firmly to eradicate it and prevent its repetition. The night clubs were closed and many of the prostitutes sent for rehabilitation to special camps. Now there are about ten clubs open in Maputo where couples can go for dancing and a cabaret, and people are free to have parties in their homes. But FRELIMO members would be expected not to spend their time going to the clubs, and to behave with decorum at private parties.

II. THE FRONT IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE PARTY!

FRELIMO, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, is dead. FRELIMO the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party lives, organised into thousands of branches throughout the country. It was these branches that were new, that emerged from the Party building campaign. The leading structures of FRELIMO remained the same, in the form of a Central Committee with about 65 members, a Permanent Political Commission of nine members and the President as the central figure amongst the leaders.

The process of admitting new members and creating branches took place in three stages, the most dramatic of which was the middle one, when candidates were put up for approval or disapproval to meetings of their fellow workers.[10]

The first stage was one of information and investigation, when the criteria for selection were explained to the people, candidates put themselves forward, and the higher structures of the Party examined the applications. This was the period of the first round of meetings in work places, the idea being not only to familiarise all the working people with the meaning of building the Party, but also to prepare the workers for their special role in the process. It was at these meetings, that explanations were given of the basic principles of FRELIMO and of the criteria to be used in accepting or rejecting members.

The point was made that the Party was not an abstract thing. It existed through its members, their behaviour, their life, their qualities, their sense of responsibility and discipline, their capacity to work collectively. The aim was not to select people because they were

university graduates or because they would talk learnedly about Marxism-Leninism, but because they were the best workers and the most conscientious, the most dedicated to the cause of socialism, those who were the most concerned about transforming the life of the people. The persons orienting the meeting then explained the disqualifying factors, and stressed the reliance that the Party was placing on the people in helping discover who were the best elements in the society and who, on the other hand, were trying to get into the Party to serve the enemy or to advance their own interests. After the candidates had presented themselves, there was singing of FRELIMO songs and the International, and the meeting closed.

The second stage was the one at which candidates were presented for acceptance or rejection by their fellow workers. At these meetings workers would comment openly about the good qualities and failings of their colleagues: 'X' was not a good candidate, because he could not control his drinking and was undisciplined at work; 'Y' because he was arrogant, 'Z' because she was not honest. Sometimes the workers were able to expose people who had been informers for the PIDE. In one ministry a leading personality very close to the minister was turned down for arrogance, that is, for being too distant from the people who worked alongside and under him. Apparently it came as a great shock to him, since he had always considered himself a good supporter of FRELIMO.

In the central hospital about 40 out of 120 candidates were rejected for a variety of reasons. A great paradox emerged: people spoke with pride of the number of persons rejected in their workplace; the more the rejections and the higher placed they were, the greater the pride. What they were getting at was the polictical health of their workplaces, in which the workers had sufficient confidence in FRELIMO and themselves to fulfil their functions effectively. On the other hand there were occasions in which people reported sadly that none had been rejected at meetings in their workplace.

In at least one major factory, the Party-building meetings transformed the political structures. This was a cashew factory employing nearly 2,000 women workers and a few hundred men. The meeting brigade from the Party noticed an uncharacteristic lack of animation on the part of the workers, and began to investigate.

Eventually after a long series of meetings, it turned out that an ex-PIDE agent had got a big position in the local dynamising group, and that he and others would abuse the workers and call them reactionary and anti-FRELIMO if they offered any criticism. He was handed over to the police, and his colleagues guilty of malpractices were dismissed, and, amidst great jubiliation, a new committee was chosen, pending the creation of a Party branch.

It was experiences like this that led the President to say that it was the people themselves who were the great filter of the Party.

The third stage was evaluation of all the relevant information by Provincial Brigades, who made the final decision on membership. Clearly, anyone exposed by his or her fellow-workers as failing to meet the qualifications, could not be accepted, at least not before a period of proving the will and ability to overcome the deficiencies mentioned. But the decision in the end was a decision of the Party itself, and if the information from all the sources showed that a person accepted by fellow-workers was nevertheless not suitable, such a person would be rejected. A third round of meetings was held at workplaces to announce the results of the campaign — candidates accepted, candidates rejected, candidates not admitted pending further investigation, and candidates told to follow the process for future members i.e. be a candidate for a further year, working closely with the branch. The last act of the campaign was to officially constitute and present the branches (here called celulas) to their follow workers, who would now know who the Party members were and feel that they too had contributed to their selection.

The results of this process are evident in every area of Mozambican life. Priority was given to the factories, the communal villages and the army. The Party building campaign has undoubtedly given a much more active role to the working class in Mozambican political life, and goes some way to resolving the question of how the leading role of the working class is expressed in a society like Mozambique, where as a class it is relatively small, relatively recent and relatively without political experience.

As the President has pointed out, it would be a failure of responsibility to suggest that the working class was already fulfilling its historic function of leading Mozambican society.[11] In reality, the national liberation struggle had developed in such a way that it had

been the organised peasantry who had led the way, not only in defeating Portuguese colonialism bùt in overcoming the new would-be exploiters. And even now it was the organised peasants of the liberated zones who were setting an example to the workers of how to organise themselves, and whose experience was being synthesised and spread to the whole country. At the same time, he added, the workers were rapidly developing their class consciousness and sense of organisation, so that with the expansion of industry and the development of the workers' councils of production, they would quickly assume their role alongside the organised peasantry as the leading force in the revolution, and as the principal agency of transformation.

The setting up of Party branches in the communal villages has also been of decisive importance. The peasants of Mozambique are overwhelmingly poor, dispersed and unorganised. Their experiences of organisation under colonialism were always negative — forced labour, migrant work, compulsory production of cotton. Now they are getting together in communal villages based on communal production and communal amenities like schools and health posts. At present, however only about ten to fifteen per cent of peasants live in these new villages, so the 'implantation' of the Party there makes it a nucleus within a nucleus, with vast future importance.

Ever since the armed struggle created liberated zones, the army has seen its role as a political-military one. It was the army that politicised the peasants and that trained most of the leading cadres of FRELIMO. Now the army is being transformed from a guerilla force into a highly trained force capable of handling modern weapons. At the same time, national service is bringing tens of thousands of young men and women into the army each year, making it a major instrument for breaking down racism, regionalism and tribalism and for inculcating the values of the new man. The motto: 'Fight, Study, Produce' is as important in the era of defending the country from attack by the racist regimes as it was during the liberation struggle, and the need to structure the Party firmly in the army is regarded as fundamental.[12]

The factory workers, the organised peasants and the soldiers were three priority groups, but not the only ones. Party members were chosen and Party branches set up in the ministries, schools and

hospitals, in fact, everywhere where life was organised. The dynamising groups still continue to represent the Party in the residential areas, and in due course they too will be replaced by proper Party branches.

The campaign proceeded under the slogan: 'Build the Party in order to improve your life'. The Party exists not for the sake of existing but to lead the process of transforming Mozambique.

Just as the Party is not an abstract thing, so we are constantly reminded, socialism is not an abstraction: it means food, clothes, schools, health and houses for the people, and it is the Party that is the instrument which inspires and mobilises the working people to achieve these goals. FRELIMO takes its place alongside communist and workers' parties of the world, deeply rooted amongst the working people of Mozambique, well organised, cohesive, proud to have contributed original solutions to the problems of building a Marxist-Leninist party in the conditions of southern Africa.

Other movements in southern Africa have their 'particularities' and will have to work out their own solutions in the light of their own conditions. But all of us can take heart from the incisive way in which FRELIMO has transformed itself from a strong, coherent and militant Front, into an even stronger, more coherent and more militant Party.

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6. In 1978 more than half a million people took part in a huge popular dance festival spread over several months that revived and transformed many dances suppressed by colonialism.
7. See: *Samora Machel — Sowing the Seeds of Revolution,* published by TCLSAC, on sale at Magic office, see note 1.
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9. *Voz da Revolucao,* November/December 1978 p.17.
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MOOROSI — CHIEF OF THE BAPHUTHI

by L.E.

In the southern part of Lesotho, bordering on the Transkei there is a mountain named Thaba Moorosi. It bears the name of a legendary chief, who lost his life on this mountain on November 20th 1879, precisely one hundred years ago, after a nine months long resistance against superior forces of the Cape colonial annexationist government. Moorosi's stand was an incident in the bitter, but often glorious wars of resistance in South Africa which marked the latter part of the 19th century. Who was Moorosi? His name has become a legend. The Sotho author, M. Damane, has written a short biography of this chief: *Moorosi, Morena wa Baphuthi*. Like most early writers in Sesotho, Damane is highly religious and inclined to ascribe history to fateful divine intervention in human affairs. But as a member of the proud warrior nation of the Basotho, Damane cannot ignore the decisive influence on history which the leaders of his own nation, such as Chief Moshoeshoe and others have exercised in South Africa. Chief Moorosi played an active role in the events of

the 19th century which shaped our present situation and it is worth while retrieving his story before it sinks into obscurity.

Who Was Moorosi?

He was born in about 1790, son of a small tribal chief Mokuoane and his wife Maidi. Like many other chiefs of that era, Mokuoane frantically tried to stem the disastrous effects of the 'Difaqane'[1] in the early part of the 19th century by gathering around him remnants of dispersed tribal groups and constituting them into some kind of stable community. We know that out of the same endeavours Chief Moshoeshoe successfully built the Basotho nation. Mokuoane, too, was partly successful. Bringing together groups of Zulu refugees from the Phuthi clan who were fleeing from Pakaditha (Mpangazitha) and his marauding Amahlubi, merging them with similar groups of Basotho, he settled them under his rule in the southern part of Lesotho, which consequently assumed the name of 'Phuthing'. The community so formed became known as the Baphuthi. Their language to this day still bears strong Zulu influences.

The stresses of the Difaqane compelled the Baphuthi not only to maintain an efficient military organisation, but also to go in for extensive plundering expeditions against their neighbours in search of cattle and booty. Their most frequent forays were directed against the Bathepu (Tembu). Similar daring raids were carried out against the Boer colonists in the Eastern Cape. In all these campaigns young Moorosi distinguished himself as a daring and competent commander, so that on the death of his father the mantle of leadership naturally fell on Moorosi.

Mokuoane had early on established an alliance with Moshoeshoe, which eventually led the Baphuthi to merge into the blossoming Basotho nation. During the lifetime of Moshoeshoe Moorosi maintained this tradition of close friendship with the former, often assisting him in campaigns and providing horses and equipment needed in the struggles against the advancing boers. But throughout Moorosi maintained a fierce independence. He vigorously resisted the intrusion of missionaries and fought with bitter determination against any attempts to annex his lands or usurp his prerogatives as a chief.

Conquest and Treachery

The superior armed forces of the white invaders never succeeded in subduing the Basotho. In the military confrontations of the long see-saw struggles in the mid-19th century the Basotho emerged as competent fighters for independence. But they were powerless against the combined treachery and machinations of the Cape Government, the Boers and British colonial authorities. Increasingly they were deprived of their most fertile lands, and eventually the Basotho accepted the 'protection' of Queen Victoria without once having been defeated in battle.

There were many levels of struggle against the conquest. Moshoeshoe, the supreme tactician and diplomat, tried to stem the technically better equipped enemy by appeals to reason and by skilful negotiations, whilst some of his sons were in favour of a 'do or die' policy. Moorosi was one of the chiefs who fought to the bitter end. When after the death of Moshoeshoe on March 11th 1870 some Basotho allied themselves with the Cape Government in a war against Moorosi, he held out alone and defied the orders of the usurpers.

In 1870 the British granted self-government to the Cape and in doing so conceded a large part of Lesotho to the new Cape Government; this included most of the land of Moorosi. The Basotho, who believed themselves to be under the protection of the British, were never consulted and Moorosi never accepted the annexation of his lands.

It took the Cape Government many years to subdue the Baphuthi and the latter took their toll in killing many soldiers of the invaders. Moorosi's war of resistance lasted almost a decade, until eventually the Cape Government sent a huge expeditionary force against him. This well equipped and determined army arrived in April 1879 and camped opposite Moorosi's stronghold on top of what is now called Thaba Moorosi. For eight months the enemy tried in vain to conquer Moorosi and his valiant defenders, but was beaten back time and again with heavy losses. Even a total blockade resulting in starvation amongst the people on top of the mountain failed to dislodge the defenders. The Governor of the Cape, Sir Gordon Sprigg, arrived in person to meet Moorosi and to induce him to surrender.

Chief Moorosi

Dramatic Encounter

Damane describes the meeting between Sprigg and Moorosi on the slopes of the mountain in a dramatic dialogue which forever immortalises the unconquerable spirit of resistance. Moorosi was ninety years old when this meeting took place. The aged warrior was accompanied by his son Letuku, by one of his commanders Qhamanae and by two warriors. With Sprigg was Captain O'Connor and two troopers.

Sprigg opened the conversation by demanding that Moorosi surrender to him and to Letsie, who was then Chief of the Basotho.

Moorosi: I should be glad to hear how I should surrender. I believe that my kingdom and my land are mine alone. I am surprised that you suggest that Letsie is my Chief. I am the chief of the Baphuthi, whilst Letsie is the chief of the Basotho.

Sprigg: We are not talking about that. I only advise you to surrender. Do not boast with what happened on the 29th of May at the junction of the Orange and Quthing, when your people killed twenty of my soldiers.

Moorosi: You say we should talk about surrender, but if that is what you called me for, there is nothing more to say.

Sprigg: If the Baphuthi continue to massacre our soldiers as you did on June 5th to Captain Ó'Connor's men, we shall send many other soldiers, and you yourself, though you are of such a ripe old age, will die a cruel death.

Moorosi: I have expressed my feelings about surrender. If you persist in talking to me in this manner, remember that I too am a chief like you; and since you have been defeated, I cannot see how you can speak as if you were a conqueror.

Sprigg: Surrender, and the Government will do what it likes with you!

Moorosi: I shall never surrender to you. I shall fight you and I shall defeat you. This is where our talk ends. I am going now and the war will proceed to the bitter end.

For many months the Baphuthi continued to resist under the leadership of Moorosi. Twice the white soldiers endeavoured to storm Moorosi's mountain fortress, but were driven back with heavy losses. Eventually on November 20th 1879 the invaders succeeded by dint of superior technique. Moorosi and his son Letuku were killed in battle;

legend has it that two other sons Doda and Mocheko escaped and later died unknown somewhere in Matatiele.

The vindictive conquerors desecrated and dismembered Moorosi's body in the presence of the remaining members of the tribe. This barbarous act of the 'bearers of civilisation' was followed by the destruction of the villages of the Baphuthi; their possessions were plundered, their women and children were driven into slavery.

The Fruits of Division

The disunity among the Basotho after the death of Moshoeshoe was exploited by the invaders. Some of the chiefs were misguided and lent their support in the war against Moorosi. Hardly a year after the death of Moorosi, the colonial government sought to take advantage of what they believed to be the demoralised state of the Basotho to demand the unconditional surrender of all guns. Conscious that this bitter injury to national pride would have rendered them completely defenceless, the Basotho fought back resulting in the War of the Guns (Ntwa ya Dithunya) of 1880.

Moorosi's remains lie buried on the mountain which bears his name, the scene of his heroic stand. The figure of the ninety year old patriarch looms huge in the history of the Basotho and of the people of South Africa. His name will live long amongst the people as one who fought back and who never surrendered. But to this day, if a Mosotho wishes to refer to somone as a sell-out, he will use the contemptible epithet 'leteketa',[2] the term by which the few traitors became known who voluntarily surrendered their guns during the War of the Guns.

Thus history remembers its heroes, whilst cowards and traitors die in ignominy and shame.

NOTES

[1]'Difaqane' – generally refers to the times of great calamity, caused by wars and resulting migrations of huge masses of people.

[2]The term is also used to denote an opportunist. It is believed to derive from the English 'ticket', which was the receipt issued for the surrender of one's gun.

ALGERIA: ALONG THE REVOLUTIONARY PATH

by A.M.

After the death of President Houari Boumedienne, the course of events in Algeria disappointed the hopes of the imperialists and reactionaries. The Algerian people, its patriotic and revolutionary forces, among them the communists and their Vanguard Socialist Party of Algeria (P.A.G.S.), succeeded in maintaining and consolidating the direction of the national charter, that is to say the path of non-capitalist development with socialist perspectives. They thus succeeded in giving new impetus to the national democratic revolution.

To appreciate the importance of this success, it is necessary to record certain recent events.

With the illness and death of President Boumedienne (October-December 1978) the situation in Algeria was marked by a sharpening of the class struggle and a period of severe tension. This struggle, concerned with opposing paths of economic development, took place between two main tendencies: —

— one progressive, favourable to revolutionary continuity and the firm application of the National Charter;
— the other pressing for economic "liberalism" and a compromise with imperialism.
This struggle developed at a time when the aims of Zionist imperialism to destabilise Algeria were becoming more precise.

The first positive developments took place in the army, with the designation of Colonel Chadli Benjedid as co-ordinator of the armed forces (Boumedienne himself was of course, Minister of Defence) and in the Revolutionary Council, with the declaration of 3 December 1978, reaffirming the anti-imperialist and progressive orientation of Algeria. The officers of the People's National Army took the same position, declaring that the army would be the guarantor of revolutionary continuity.

A decisive gain lay at the foundation of these developments: this was the strength which the socialist option has gained in the widest circles, as being the indispensable condition of success in the task of national construction.

The death of President Boumedienne took place against this background on December 27 1978. It sparked off large popular demonstrations which — in addition to very real grief• — expressed the people's attachment to the revolutionary process which President Boumedienne symbolised.

With the preparations for the F.L.N. Party Congress and the election of delegates to it, the struggle increased in intensity. Meanwhile, the founding congress of the National Union of Algerian Youth (U.N.J.A.) took place from 6 to 10 January 1979 and was a great success for the progressive and anti-imperialist forces.

The F.L.N. Party Congress took place from January 27 to February 1. The principal results are well known: —
— adoption of the F.L.N. Party statutes, election of a central committee and a political bureau;
— nomination of Chadli Benjedid as sole candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, after his election as secretary general of the Party;
— adoption of various resolutions which not only confirmed the official line but on some points represented fresh progress.
The first meeting of the central committee of the F.L.N. Party firmly

endorsed these results and this line.

All these results reflected the outcome of years of struggle, during which the forces of the Right were put increasingly on the defensive and were increasingly exposed. It was not merely a struggle about resolutions, but one concerned with the strength of the progressive forces on the ground.

Generally one can say that in spite of the irreparable loss which the death of Boumedienne constitutes, and in view of the way in which the broad masses took the opportunity to raise their voices and express their aspirations, the forces of progress have made significant gains, both as regards the clarification of policies and as regards potential for mobilisation.

Vital Contribution

The PAGS has made its contribution to all this and has publicly proposed solutions for consideration by all progressive forces, with a view to their adoption in the interests of independence and national construction.

In particular, it has published the following material: —

In the Footsteps of Boumedienne — Defend our Country and Consolidate the Revolution, dated December 30, 1978, in which the PAGS, while pointing out what it considered the correct way forward, appealed for unity around realistic objectives of anti-imperialism and national construction;

For a Programme of Action and Anti-Imperialist Unity, dated January 6 1979, in which the PAGS proposed a national programme of action and the objectives to be attained by it;

For a United and Enlightening Congress, dated January 19 1979, in which the PAGS set out its concept of the principal objectives of the FLN Party Congress;

To Win the Battle of Production and Development, dated January 20, 1979 in which the PAGS showed the direction in which the efforts should be made in this connection.

Finally the PAGS published a letter to the FLN Party Congress, dated January 23 1979. It called for the election of Chadli Benjedid to the Presidency of the Republic and sent him a letter of congratulations after his election.

In all this material, which was very well received by progressive and anti-imperialist workers, the PAGS constantly showed its spirit of unity and went beyond questions of personalities to tackle questions of policy — questions which have to be answered in order to consolidate the national democratic revolution in Algeria and to move on towards the socialist revolution.

The situation continues to develop positively in Algeria, but with certain new features.

Since the Fourth Congress of the FLN Party, the first meeting of its central committee and the government changes, factors favourable to the anti-imperialist line have grown and developed. Other factors, either of long standing or connected with recent events, tend to hinder, or even to call into question, these favourable perspectives.

The contents and the tone of President Benjedid's message to the nation expressed the main features of the situation and highlighted the principal need: *work* related to our basic policy options, serving the *national interest* and the *social and democratic aspirations of our citizens*. This message is entirely in line with the policy of economic consolidation and recovery announced by President Boumedienne in his address to the National Assembly in March 1977, on the implementation of which he was working before his death.

Thanks to the joint efforts of revolutionary forces in Algeria and in the world, favourable conditions exist for the implementation of this policy.

The work of the government has been resumed in an increasingly co-ordinated way, with a tendency towards more consistent policies. Serious efforts have been made to draw up objective balance sheets, to prepare measures for the defence of economic independence and to settle the social problems connected with production in co-operation with trade unions, workers and management.

The militant mass movement continues to grow in a manner ever more dynamic, responsible and constructive.

The congresses of several trade unions, together with a number of meetings and seminars, have begun to deal with certain problems of inaction and demobilisation. They have opened the way to an improvement of activity at shop floor level and its co-ordination with organs of management.

This progress is inseparable from a rising political consciousness and from vigilance against the actions — no matter how subtle — of imperialism and reaction.

Progress has also been noted in respect of changes at various levels of the FLN Party and of the state apparatus. Though as yet limited and fragile, this progress provides evidence of a retreat from conservative politics, undemocratic methods and flirtation with business circles.

In conclusion, one can see a reinforcement of the spirit of anti-imperialist unity, a growing understanding and solidarity among patriots, in particular those committed to the National Charter. One must hope for the spread of this spirit to those patriots who are as yet less committed to the National Charter and to socialism, but who are nevertheless sincerely dedicated to national independence, to modernisation and to the dignity of our people.

Dangers Ahead

Meanwhile, these favourable conditions cannot hide the dangers, difficulties and serious problems which lie ahead on the road of reconstruction and national independence. These difficulties and dangers demand that we should grow out of the triumphalist and debilitating attitudes which regard socialism as a stage already attained or (as Lenin once said) "as near as the Nevsky Prospect."

We must never forget for a moment this primordial fact: Algeria is one of the priority targets of international imperialism, aided by local and regional reaction, in its global strategy of robbery and domination.

Though momentarily dismayed by the successes of the progressive and patriotic forces, imperialism and reaction are carefully preparing their counter-attack. On our western frontier, the royal regime in Morocco, supported by imperialism and its African accomplices, worried by its own internal problems, threatens Algeria with direct intervention. This is what has decided Hassan II to authorise his armies to exercise the so-called "right of pursuit" — the same "right of pursuit" which the fascist regimes of Vorster and Smith exercise against the people of Angola and Mozambique. He aims to exert a continuous pressure upon Algeria and its government to force us to abandon our anti-imperialist policies and in particular

our support for the freedom, the dignity and the interests of the Saharan people, represented by their guiding political force, the Polisario Front.

Algeria cannot abandon this path. It is not only the path of our choice, but also involves territorial integrity and our revolutionary gains. It is consistent with our interests and also with the principles of peaceful co-existence between states. We face an expansionist regime, allied to the strategic plans of Zionism and imperialism — a regime which has openly proclaimed its hostility to the existence on its frontiers of a system based on different political and ideological foundations from its own. It is this that makes the strengthening of Algeria's defensive capacity and its alliances an imperative part of its efforts.

The imperialists have succeeded in imposing various forms of *new dependence* on Algeria, as a result of previous efforts at development which have not always been conducted in accordance with a sufficiently vigilant strategy. Multinational companies are exerting all kinds of pressure, together with the French government, which makes use of the problem of migrant Algerian labour[1] to force Algeria to follow a more "liberal" course. For this purpose the imperialists are taking advantage of Algeria's external indebtedness, which has reached a level capable of endangering national policy if adequate steps are not taken.

The large landowners, commercial agents, large wholesalers and other interests opposed to the healthy and profitable management of the state sector are intensifying their class agitation at the moment when new steps are being taken to pursue and deepen the agrarian revolution.

International imperialism, Arab and African reaction and the Socialist International are intensifying their efforts to divide those countries and those forces which objectively ought to be united against imperialism. For this purpose, they resort to anti-communism and anti-sovietism. They endeavour to deprive non-alignment of its anti-imperialist content. The immediate objective of imperialism is to ensure that the non-aligned nations will appear disunited, that they will be unable to present a united front against Zionism, against South African racialism and against the attempts of the multi-national companies and the imperialist states to prevent

the construction of a new economic order.

Finally, in Algeria itself, opponents of the socialist option are not confining themselves to exploitation of the objective difficulties in the way of construction. They also take advantage of the subjective contradictions and false problems which arise among the patriotic forces, and the inadequacies which emerge in their work. They try in various ways to provoke divisions or prevent the reconciliation of patriotic, anti-imperialist and progressive forces. The latter must therefore make the greatest possible efforts to preserve their unity as the most essential condition of their success, and to raise their work to new levels of consciousness and of quality.

Main Tasks

The tasks to be undertaken are thus numerous and important. Algerian progressives and anti-imperialists must achieve the necessary conditions for these tasks to be undertaken, and for the complex problems of the struggle for development to be solved. The *battle for production* must be successfully fought, as the central task of the present period. All the manoeuvres and the pressures of imperialism must be faced, and the political instruments of the revolution, required for its consolidation and development, must be created.

The PAGS has drawn attention several times to this essential concept. Algeria, having fixed socialism as its objective, is at present going through a transitional phase of which the *principal class content* is the building of the state sector and its defence against imperialism and reaction. The working class, the class of the future, is playing an increasing role in this phase and carries a great national responsibility, which is not only economic *but also political,* to forge the necessary political instruments and means.

This implies a high level of revolutionary consciousness which goes beyond merely economic and labour issues. It is necessary to contribute powerfully to the preservation and consolidation of present favourable political conditions, and of the great patriotic alliance around the National Charter and the socialist option.

The essential tasks in this phase of the Algerian revolution are: —

— a consistent anti-imperialist policy, both in foreign and in domestic affairs;

— the putting into practice and the deepening of revolutionary democracy in the building and the functioning of the political instruments of the revolution.

It is therefore a matter of permanently raising the ideological and political level so as to master the problems of the present phase, in which the objective is to consolidate national democratic gains in order to progress in the direction of socialism. Above all, the patriotic forces must continue to work together along the path which has already, during the past year, led to the creation of better conditions for the building of the two twin political instruments of the revolution:—

— *a vast mass movement,* which is already the form which can be taken by the broad anti-imperialist front which Algeria needs and will always need;

— *a great vanguard party,* founded in scientific socialism, required to guide the socialist revolution at the head of a broad movement — a national front.

Progress has been made in this direction. It is due to a conception which does not reduce the building of political instruments to the mere erection of bureaucratic apparatus, but links it to the objectives and the struggles of the people, of the militants and of the government. Such a conception takes the fullest account of the living, dynamic and dialectical link between the mass movement, the unity in action of the broadest anti-imperialist forces, and the struggle, the conditions and the constituent elements of a vanguard party of the new type.

The difficulty is to define accurately the *intermediate objectives* which must be the stages towards the realisation of the fundamental and long-term objective. No doubt this will be successfully achieved if we continue along the path of favouring the emergence, thanks to a powerful mass movement, of supple and active cadres, open to the masses, as has already begun to happen in the FLN itself.

At the present moment, this means *prolonging, broadening and deepening* the efforts already being made to *renew* the mass organisations, the state apparatus and the FLN.

For its part, the PAGS is convinced that, if the revolutionary process continues to bring success, Algeria will one day see the building, in the form which suits our conditions, of a socialist party

such as described above. This is why it regards the present alliance between partisans of socialism, wherever they may be, not as a tactical or temporary alliance, but as a strategic one which will inevitably find its organisational form as the revolution progresses. This vision of a strategic alliance is the basis of our fundamental support for the National Charter — the "common denominator" of all revolutionaries, which will continue to be enriched and deepened.

Algerian communists, who place the national interest and the advancement of the revolution above all partisan ambition, will continue patiently and hopefully to pursue their policy of unity. In all circumstances they will govern their activities by the principles which all patriots have in common:—

— carry the battle of production, of management and of development to a successful conclusion.

— defend our country and the gains of our revolution against imperialism and regional reaction.

References

1. The French government threatens to repatriate 200,000 to 300,000 Algerian workers who have emigrated to France as a result of the problems of the colonial period.

(The author is an Algerian journalist. His article was written in French and translated by *The African Communist)*

AFRICA NOTES & COMMENT

by Vukani Mawethu

GHANA — MUTINY OR COUP D'ETAT

On Monday June 4, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings was supposed to appear before a court-martial to answer charges of an attempted coup on May 15. But the powers that be were outmanoeuvred and Rawlings came out of the prison cell to become Ghana's new ruler. It was not all that peaceful.

Since then much has happened in Ghana. The former heads of state Lt. Gen. Afrifa, Gen. Acheampong, and Gen Akuffo and other senior army officers have been executed. They were found guilty of "acquiring and obtaining loans, properties, material goods, favours and advantages, and committing abuses by virtue of their official positions in the public service" and were further accused of "gross negligence, intentional or reckless dissipation of public property." The estimated 5,000 people who witnessed the execution by firing squad shouted: "Action! Action! Finish them all!"

What has happened in Ghana? What has caused such a reaction from the people?

The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) chaired by Rawlings — a successor to the Supreme Military Council under Gen. Fred Akuffo — says its task is a "cleansing exercise" because the military men since 1972 under Acheampong "brought suffering to our fellow citizens and disrepute to our forces". This development reflects a resentment against the top brass in the army — those ruthless money grabbers who did all they could to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. Ghana was characterised by maladministration and economic chaos; sunken reputation of the Armed Forces; no controlled prices, corruption; black market and political blackmail; official misappropriation and misallocation of resources; nepotism; tribalism; smuggling and embezzling. In the words of Rawlings "the country had lost direction".

It is true that the junior officers who guarded the houses and polished the shoes of the senior officers were the ones who were most directly affected — after all, the army was the most organised social force in a country that was ruled by generals. The social contradictions which are political in nature reflected themselves also in the army. This explains why Rawlings was supported by the students, workers, peasants and even the "market women" who are a powerful economic and political force in Ghana. We say *even* because most of these "market women" are capitalist oriented — they are interested in money — but they are also nationalist: they want to maintain the prestige and reputation of Ghana, the legacy of Nkrumah.

It is for these reasons that the "cleansing exercise" of Rawlings had to go beyond the domain of the army to include civilians, because a large group of bureaucrats, businessmen (local and foreign) exploited the corruption of the senior officers in the military administration to enrich themselves. They had collaborators in all sectors including the ministries and their activity covered practically everything from import licensing and contracts awards to revenue collection and commodity distribution — hoarders and profiteers in a corrupt system and part of a network of privilege, patronage, "self help" and "mutual help" (for friends and relatives) during a time when the living standards of the majority of Ghanaians were sinking. Banks gave loans and overdrafts to commissioners of state to pursue their business interests and good farming land in Asutsuare, for

instance, was shared out between commissioners.

In other words the principles of the "cleansing exercise" needed to be clearly defined to combat organised plunder of national resources by the "elite" of the Armed Forces and their civilian helpers — the civilian technocrats and civil servants — who ran the economy. One thing that is clear is that the tasks facing the progressive forces in Ghana are formidable and reaction is still strong — let us hope that the forces that come to rule Ghana will do everything in their power to revive the spirit of Nkrumah — something very important to Ghana. But that is not enough; more has to be done to grapple with the present day problems.

The events in Ghana have important lessons for Africa: the training soldiers receive in Sandhurst is not suitable for Africa — it only sharpens contradictions within the army and society and those who try to implement it usually find themselves in direct opposition to the interests of the masses.

Secondly it is important for progressive Africa to pay more attention to the army because the mutinies or coups which have come to characterise the African political scene can — if supported by the masses and a progressive organisation — change the organisation of the state and therefore have far-reaching implications for the future development of the nation as a whole. What is disturbing is that at times the progressive movements tend either to be spectators or at the most react to the developments instead of spearheading such changes and thus become instruments of change.

Kenya: walking on a tight rope

Kenya is usually portrayed as one of the most "successful" African countries with a "good investment climate" because of its political and economic "stability." But a closer look at the country's policies reveals an irreconcilable contradiction between the productive forces and production relations, a contradiction which reflects itself in the contrast between the proclaimed official policy and the reality in the country. Let us take as an example the "contradiction" between the

officially proclaimed foreign policy and the internal policy. Kenya's foreign policy is supposed to rest on four pillars, namely: non-alignment; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; support of African liberation in Southern Africa via the OAU; and the promotion of international peace and understanding through bilateral relations, the U.N. and other international bodies.

But the reality in the country shows that the internal policy is aimed at building a "thriving" capitalist economy with fundamental linkages to the western economies. This has led to the emergence of an influential indigenous middle class — the "wabensi" (Swahili meaning owners of Mercedes Benz) who exercise an influence on the political and economic life of the country. Kenya is supposed to advance the ideals of Kenyan and African interests, but the very fact that the East African Community (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) had to disband despite or because of the fact that Kenya played the role of an "elder brother" does not testify to this. And in the Uganda-Tanzanian conflict Kenya played no positive role. There have been territorial claims and border clashes between Somalia and Kenya and her relations with the other neighbours, Sudan and Ethiopia, seem to indicate that Kenya is walking on a tight rope.

The disturbing feature of Kenya's African policy is the seemingly wavering attitude towards the liberation movements — an attitude based on the meaningless formula and false premise: unity of the liberation movements at whatever cost. This tendency which comes out openly in the statements of the leading spokesmen of the government has the danger that Kenya might degenerate into a "second Malawi". But these forces are not yet in a position to achieve their goal, thanks to the outspoken politicians and trade unionists who favour an outright commitment to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

What about foreign investments?

The western countries, especially Britain, USA and West Germany are the leading foreign investors. Kenya's state-backed investment institutions such as the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) attract large sums in investment capital from such sources as the West German Development Fund and the European Investment Fund. These funds then become available for investment in both existing and new projects in Kenya, in

partnership with private sector investors. In 1978 net capital inflow in both public and private sectors was £ Kenya 171 million — nearly 89 per cent over the 1977 figure.

It goes without saying that Britain remains the biggest single source of external "aid" and there are such important sources as the World Bank and its subsidiary, the International Development Association, EEC etc. Foreign private investment is usually found in manufacturing industry, ranging from textile manufacture to vehicle assembly plus a large sugar development programme. Foreign controlled companies operate also in tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and exports.

The industries outside Nairobi make heavy use of labour and natural resources available in Kenya to stem the "influx" into the capital. Examples are the large vehicle assembly plant, in which British Leyland is a partner, at Thika; the Guinness Peat Group's development of a chemical and animal feeds project at Eldoret, and a Swiss-backed plant to produce power alcohol from molasses at Kisumu.

What about the land question?

Land ownership, which preoccupied settler politics throughout the colonial period, has been a politically sensitive issue and indeed a fundamental issue in the independence movement. Through administrative measures the Africans were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands with the result that at independence in 1963 approximately 3.4 million hectares, representing 75 per cent of the most fertile land, had been expropriated either in freehold or leasehold tenure. Half a million African peasants were rendered landless. This resulted in socio-economic and political problems, social disruption to African cultural institutions, severe landlessness and political restlessness in African areas. Even the harambee, haraka and shirika schemes for rehabilitation did not help much. The solution to landlessness in Kenya will require a lot of radical changes in the law and in the politics of Kenya, which will have to do away with such meaningless formulae as "sanctity of individual property" because they cannot solve the problems arising from historical imbalance.

The political situation in Kenya has been characterised by scandals and gangsterism. Fresh in our minds is the scandalous act of

barring Oginga Odinga from politics after his release from detention in 1971 and the political party he had formed, the Kenya People's Union, was banned because it was seen as the "left-wing threat to the government." There have been more sinister developments such as the broad daylight murder in Nairobi of Tom Mboya and the barbaric assassination of Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, not to mention the arbitrary detention of Ngugi wa Thiong'o who was released in December last year after nearly 12 months' incarceration.

These developments cannot be isolated from the post-independence politics of Kenya when KANU, the ruling "party", which had initially embodied a more radical inter-ethnic position degenerated into an organisation safeguarding "Kikuyu interests" in the post-independence era.

The grip of the ruling clique — in the interests of its class — on public life and opinion in Kenya manifests itself in many ways. The daily newspaper *Nation* is owned by the Agha Khan in Paris and the *Standard* newspapers are owned by Tiny Rowlands' Lonrho in London. The book publishing houses are owned by branches of foreign concerns such as Heinemann, Longmans, Oxford, Nelsons, Macmillan etc. The only exception is the government owned Kenya Literature Bureau. But unfortunately in Kenya, African languages are totally neglected, including Swahili, which is an all-Kenya national language. This explains the reaction of such patriots as Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Recently he complained of what he called "social cannibalism" which he maintains has "reduced over three quarters of mankind to beggary, poverty and death, not because they don't work, but because their wealth goes to feed, clothe and shelter a few idle classes in America, Europe and Japan."

It is the duty of the progressive forces in Africa to do away with "social cannibalism" so that our people may enjoy the fruits of uhuru.

16th Summit of the OAU

The 16th Summit of the heads of state and governments of the African continent met in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, last July. It was preceded by the 23rd session of the council of ministers which laid the foundation for discussions by the heads of states and governments.

This summit came at a very crucial time in the history of the continent, when tension was at a high point. The range of issues that came under heavy discussion were the following: the southern African situation with special emphasis on the Zimbabwe and Namibian questions, and the question of sanctions against South Africa; the recognition of Polisario as the true vanguard of the Sahouri people and their right to self-determination and nationhood; the Middle East question; and the right of the Palestinian people to independence; the Ugandan-Tanzanian conflict; the establishment of a Pan-African force; and the Chad issue.

All discussions were based on the principles enshrined in the charter of the OAU which reflected very serious weaknesses in the charter itself. These weaknesses revealed very serious problems affecting the fundamental basis on which African unity is based and the lack of a common understanding of the process that would lead towards the total liberation of Africa, the essence of which reflected a diversity of interests. This is borne out from the discussions and arguments advanced on principles and positions to be adopted on the above mentioned issues on which serious differences emerged.

On the one hand it was clear that imperialist influence in Africa is still a dominant factor, and this poses a serious challenge to all progressive forces in the continent. On the other hand, the growing strength of the progressive voice in the OAU is reflected in the decisions reached — though not without serious opposition. The emergence of more progressive states in the continent has proved to be a prerequisite towards a qualitative transformation of the OAU to an instrument for bringing about unity based on a clear anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-racist stand, which is the only guarantee that the decolonisation process will lead to genuine peace, unity and stability.

On the whole, the summit approached all problems with frank and open discussion which has become a characteristic of the OAU. In the southern African situation there was unanimity on the condemnation of the racist regimes in southern Africa and new pledges for support of the liberation movements. Of prime importance was the reaffirmation of the recognition of the Patriotic Front as the sole and authentic representative of the Zimbabwean people. The non-recognition of the so called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia led by the opportunist power-hungry Bishop Abel Muzorewa was a warning to the west, in particular the insensitive British government of Thatcher.

On the Namibian question the summit reaffirmed its recognition of SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people. Despite a disturbing string of reservations on the naming of western collaborators with the South African racist regime, the summit reaffirmed its commitment to the isolation of the regime including the non-recognition of the Bantustans, and the imposition of sanctions. Connected with this was the commitment to the support of the front-line states which provide rear bases for the liberation movements.

The Western Sahara question, which was the subject of long debates, was finally resolved in favour of the Sahouri people. Despite relentless attempts by Morocco and Mauritania, and despite inconsistencies on the part of some African states, the Polisario Front was ultimately granted recognition as the authentic representative of the Sahouri people. Thanks to the strength of the progressive voice, the Moroccan and Mauritanian regimes came under heavy condemnation for taking over the dirty work of the ousted Spanish colonialists. The subsequent decision of Mauritania to make peace with Polisario is a direct consequence of what happened at Monrovia.

One of the most disturbing sessions was the debate on the Middle East. Although everyone, including Egypt, reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to self-determination, Sadat escaped condemnation as was demanded by the Arab states and other African states on his separate signing of the "peace treaty" with Israel. As pointed out by one Arab delegate, the organisation's stand

on the issue was hypocritical in that whilst "condemning a Muzorewa in the South, another Muzorewa (Sadat) in the north of Africa" is allowed to get away with having openly sold out. Protest against Sadat was registered when he addressed the summit by a walk out-staged by all Arab countries with the exception of the Sudan and Somalia. Benin also walked out. The discussion on this issue exposed the now common but painful reality of inconsistence that is becoming a characteristic of the Organisation of African Unity.

Serious weaknesses were also reflected in the debate on the Ugandan situation. Again, as no one could condone the Amin regime of terror, the strong criticisms levelled against the Tanzanian involvement by some states and complete silence on the issue by others, was a sign of weakness of the organisation. The result was that it became more of an issue between personalities i.e. Binaisse, Nimeiry and Obasanjo, which ended in bitterness and open hostility between them. The issue was not resolved and is still a threat to African unity. If it is not properly resolved in a frank and principled way, rather than in the emotional manner in which it was tackled, a serious evaluation of the OAU principles becomes a dire and immediate necessity.

Despite these weaknesses, it is at the same time encouraging that the OAU does tackle the issues with the seriousness they deserve and this is what makes it tick. What is still necessary is a clear in-depth analysis of the continent's problems and the working out of practical solutions. Although it is clear that imperialism is frantically trying to tighten its economic grip on Africa and thereby its influence, the commitment to the total decolonisation of Africa by the OAU remains the only guarantee towards creating conditions leading to more concentration on solving the economic problems that leave the continent at the mercy and manipulation of western monopoly capital.

The liberation of southern Africa, Western Sahara and the Palestinian people, and the removal of the sources of conflict in Africa, remain a challenge fo the OAU. The spirit of the debates at this summit, and in particular the growth in strength of the progressive voice of the OAU, is Africa's hope and competence to resolve all the problems currently plaguing the continent.

NIGERIA: WILL CIVILIAN RULE BRING DEMOCRACY?

by Geoffrey Hunt and Christos Theodoropoulos

Nigeria, the most populous African state, is due to return to civilian rule in October this year after more than thirteen years of military rule under which massive oil exports have consolidated the position of the rapacious neocolonial ruling class while 90 per cent of the country's estimated 80 million people remain in squalor.

Five political parties all representing the same ruling class interests and led by the aged millionaire politicians of Nigeria's short-lived First Republic (1963-1966) jostled for the electorate's favour with the same empty promises and the same pro-imperialist economic programmes.

Meanwhile the trade unions have been put under strict state control and the working class parties excluded from the elections. The industrial working class, now four million strong, continues to grow in numbers and in militancy as a wage freeze and anti-strike laws continue to keep profits high for the multiplying foreign companies and their Nigerian shareholders and collaborators.

Agriculture, once the basis of the colonial economy, has almost collapsed in the wake of vast migration into urban slums so that extensive food imports have supplemented the intake of Western consumer goods which has been so lavish that Nigeria has borrowed heavily from foreign sources.

The Colonial Heritage

After a long history of slave trading, Nigeria was drawn into the colonial system of imperialism during the second half of the nineteenth century and this has had an influence which still pervades the life of the country. Colonial violence and the intrusion of capitalist relations which marginalised the existing pre-capitalist modes of production left an economy grossly distorted to meet the requirements of the metropolitan centre for raw materials such as palm oil, groundnuts and cocoa, British trade was established with the United Africa Company (successor to the Royal Niger Company) which is now a branch of Unilever, still a very powerful imperialist force in Nigeria.

The unjust international division of labour into which Nigeria was forced created an indigenous group of compradors and employees of the colonial state as the area developed into a lucrative commodity market and profitable investment sphere of the British Empire, providing monopolies with an almost inexhaustible source of cheap labour and natural resources.

The colonial administration dealt with Nigeria, in effect, as two colonies. The mainly Hausa north was controlled by 'indirect rule' through semi-feudal emirates and the islamic education system of the region was deliberately left untouched. The south consequently took a rapid lead in education provided by Christian missionaries, which set the basis for the growth of a politically conscious commericial group, particularly among the Yoruba and Ibo. This educational differentiation gave colonialism the opportunity of exploiting further the ethnic and religious diversity of the area by playing off one group against the other. This manipulation of nationalities generated widespread mistrust and hostility which has impeded Nigerian integration right up to the present time.

The Nigerian national and labour movement grew relatively early despite colonial divide and rule. Anti-colonial organisation began in

1922 with Herbert Macaulay's nationalist party aimed at self-government, and Nnamdi Azikiwe, now a presidential candidate, was one of Nigeria's leading nationalists in the 1930s. The working class movement played an important part in these agitations, the first trade union already having been founded in 1912. The first real worker militancy came with the railway workers in the 1920s and 30s, and in 1941 union leader Michael Imoudu led 3,000 rail workers to government house in Lagos and won substantial gains from the colonial state. By 1943 trade unions came together under a Congress and produced a newspaper, *The Nigerian Worker,* which the authorities soon put under censorship.

In 1945 came the first general strike involving 50,000 workers and lasting six weeks again ending in victory. As worker organisation increased so colonial suppression became more brutal. In 1946 workers were killed at Burutu, then U.A.C. workers were killed in a 1947 strike, and 21 defenceless miners were shot dead by police at Iva Valley colliery in a 1949 strike. As the trade union movement grew in strength however a split appeared between the pro-imperialist ICFTU faction and the WFTU faction, and repeated attempts at a national organisation failed.

Neocolonial politics

Despite the decisive contribution of workers and peasants to the anti-imperialist struggle political independence which came in 1960 was put under the leadership of a small bureaucratic and commercial bourgeoisie favoured by British capitalism. This leadership was committed to the maintenance of existing economic structures and, apart from a few cosmetic changes, did not attempt to challenge the role imposed on Nigeria in the international division of labour and actually intensified contacts with British and other foreign monopolies.

Britain's colonial policy of divide and rule and its pre-independence constitution, which divided Nigeria into three main regions along ethnic lines, had already set the framework for future intra-bourgeois struggles and civil war. Now, each regional government consisted of the party rulers of the regional party which considered its ethnic domain as its exclusive preserve, and these parties financed themselves through the misappropriation of public

funds.

And so the British parliamentary arrangement of ethnic parties quickly degenerated into a wild scramble for wealth and power on an individual, clan and ethnic basis, resulting in political thuggery, election rigging, a general strike in 1964, threats of secession from all regions, and finally an 'anti-corruption' military coup in January 1966. The coup was abortive however and the conservative military establishment took over under an Ibo, major-general Aguiyi-Ironsi.

In a matter of months interest groups had fanned resentment against the Ibos and when Ironsi unwisely declared policies widely interpreted as implying the dissolution of the federation massacres began in the north and the northern troops mutinied. By the following year the ethnic ideology culminated in a full scale civil war. This brought Yakubu Gowon to power in August 1966 to rule for nine years, the period in which oil came to dominate the economy .

Towards the end of the 30 month civil war an armed uprising, known as "Agbekoya", took place in Yorubaland in protest against high taxes and low cocoa prices, and this sparked off a longstanding discontent against landlords and traditional rulers. Meanwhile in the cities the working class had grown to over a million although it was still without an effective party organisation. It is true that the Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party had been founded in 1963 but it experienced internal divisions. So there was no effective opposition when Gowon introduced anti-labour legislation and persecuted the handful of militants during and immediately after the war. Police clashes with workers resulted in many casualties in this period.

The civil war strengthend the bond between foreign capital and the Nigerian commercial bourgeoisie now in alliance with the military. Meanwhile the bureaucracy rapidly expanded into a new arrangement of twelve states created by Gowon, taking advantage of the huge income from the boom in oil exports. In fact Gowon's regime was characterised by lavish consumerism and extravagant prestige projects such as a $250 million Festival of African Arts, colour television, extensive highway construction to meet the importation of thousands of air-conditioned Mercedes and Volvos, heavy expenditure on a 200,000 strong army created by the war and the importation of all manner of luxury goods from champagne to executive jets.

In 1974 as Gowon's regime reached a high point in ostentation, corruption and authoritarianism it scrapped the proposed return to civilian rule. In January 1975 massive salary increases were granted all at once to the public sector which immediately resulted in an inflation rate of over 35%. Protests over 'unfair distribution of the bonanza, and student demonstrations, prepared the way for Gowon's downfall in a bloodless coup in July 1975 which brought to power Brigadier Murtala Mohammed.

It was this new regime which promised a return to civilian rule in 1979. It also created seven new states, now making a total of nineteen, and dismissed all state governors and thousands of civil servants for corruption and inefficiency. An abortive pro-Gowon counter coup in 1976 resulted in Mohammed's death but the mildy reformist policy he adopted continued under his successor Lt. General Olusegun Obasanjo with schemes such as universal primary education, 'Operation Feed the Nation' (a futile effort to counter the decline of agriculture) and local government reform.

Southern Africa & the new foreign policy

The years immediately after independence were characterised by a passive foreign policy and a 'record of shame' vis-a-vis Southern African affairs. But the Mohammed/Obasanjo military government is generally regarded as having infused "dynamism" into its external relations.

It has shown an active interest in West African, OAU, Commonwealth and international affairs. For example, the regime participated in talks on the establishment of a 'New International Economic Order', in the deliberations of the UN conference on the Law of the Sea, and it plays an important role within the newly created Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the treaty of which was signed in Lagos in May 1975. It has an impressive record of mediation in inter-African disputes (e.g. the Kano Accord on the Chadian conflict) and in peace-keeping missions (e.g. Middle-East).

It is in the field of African national liberation however that the nationalism of the military government has been most evident. In November 1975, after some initial vacillation, the Mohammed regime declared active support for the MPLA government in Angola

and urged other African states to do the same. The policy of the regime on the racist governments of Southern Africa equals the resoluteness of the Angolan stand. In the words of Obasanjo, "we shall not consider any weapon too mean to hasten the end of all oppression in Southern Africa and to ensure the total liquidation of apartheid, foreign domination, and economic exploitation".

The regime has, among other things, granted positive assistance to the liberation movements "recognised by the OAU", established a Southern Africa Relief Fund, granted assistance to refugees and accommodation to Southern African students in Nigerian schools and universities, and hosted conferences against apartheid and racial discrimination. The leaders of all the new political parties have made statements declaring their intention to continue the Obasanjo government's Southern Africa policy.

At the same time one cannot view the foreign policy of the present Nigerian government in isolation from its socio-economic basis and its domestic policy. The dependency of the Nigerian economy and the collaboration of its ruling class with foreign capital does confine its foreign policy within certain narrow limits and may actually draw attention away from its internal class struggle.

Oil & the Economics of Dependence

Nigeria's oil became important when Britain needed oil after the 1956 Suez fiasco and the Arab boycott. Trial shipments began in 1958 and in twenty years oil grew to a position in which it earned about 90% of the country's foreign exchange and led to the neglect of the colonial agricultural export products.

This dependence on a single export commodity implies a very unstable political and economic situation vulnerable to price and demand fluctuation. Thus, a temporary decline in oil revenues in 1978 resulted in an increase in university fees which immediately provoked widespread demonstrations of students, schoolchildren, workers and market-women which led to the police killing of eight demonstrators.

As in other exploited countries, the state in Nigeria has been increasingly intervening in the economy, especially in the oil industry. This process is misleadingly referred to by the Nigerian ruling class politicians as "mixed economy" and is even entrenched in

the new constitution. In reality it reflects the impotence of indigenous enterprise in the face of foreign monopoly. It is common, for example, for state financial organs to invest in the few local enterprises and for private contractors to depend exclusively on the state for contract awards. At the same time, with the state as a partner the foreign capitalists are better insured against the 'risks' of an 'unpredictable' market and 'undisciplined' labour force. This is precisely the case with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation which now has 60 per cent equity shares in the major oil companies (Shell-BP, Mobil, Gulf, Agip and ELF) and was granted top priority in this year's budget with $1 billion capital allocation (out of a total capital expenditure of $6.6 billion in this year's budget). Texaco, the largest oil marketing company was recently required to sell shares to the public bringing it in line with other marketing companies such as Shell and Esso.

As has been pointed out by a Nigerian economist, the country's "mixed economy is a thoroughly neocolonial capital system. It manipulates the State apparatus through the public sector in order to sustain and intensify the savage exploitation of the masses. This is for the selfish benefits of the owners of foreign monopoly capital and their unpatriotic domestic collaborators among the privileged classes".[1]

Similarly the so-called 'Indigenisation Policy' of the military regime, initiated in the Second National Development Plan (1970-74) and improved upon in that of 1975-80, has only really succeeded in giving shares in foreign capitalist concerns to members of the ruling class (two new stock exchanges are to be set up to facilitate share deals) and has failed to have any impact on property relations. The government has in fact emphasised that indigenisation is not to be confused with nationalisation and that it wishes to encourage private enterprise and foreign investors.

While Nigeria's per capita income of about $200 is one of the lowest in the world her inflation rate is now at somewhere between 20 and 30 per cent (officially 18 per cent) and rising as food imports increase with the decline in agriculture. Food imports cost $99 million in 1972, $847 million in 1977 and $900 million in 1978. Agricultural export earnings in 1978 were only $440 million, and no groundnuts or palm oil ('traditional' revenue sources) were exported.

In fact palm products were imported, together with rice (although rice is grown in the north). Cocoa production fell by 50 per cent between 1971 and 1978. There can be no doubt that government efforts to stimulate agriculture with credit to rich farmers and its recent Land Use Decree vesting all land in the state will exacerbate the pauperisation of the rural population as agriculture becomes a capitalist enterprise.

Manufacturing production by indigenous entrepreneurs stagnated in 1974 and since then its contribution has been negligible. Within the present neocolonial setting it is inevitable that Nigerian businessmen continue to find import, distribution, transport, real estate speculation and renting of property the most profitable enterprises. One is perhaps justified in drawing the conclusion that there is very little evidence at present of a national, anti-imperialist bourgeoisie in Nigeria. The declaration of the government that it wishes to encourage local production, particularly in agriculture by offering credit facilities and protectionism seems unrealistic in view of the free sway of giant foreign companies such as Lonrho, Shell-BP, ICI, Peugeot, Dunlop, Volkswagen, British Leyland, John Holt, Raleigh, GEC, Plessey and Barclays Bank. Pepsi Cola is opening a $4 million plant in Ilorin this year, Michelin and Dunlop are investing $21 million in a rubber estate in Bendel (the largest in Africa), Leyland opened a new commercial vehicle assembly plant at Ibadan recently, and plants are to be built by Fiat, Daimler-Benz and Steyr, to give just a few examples of the invasion of foreign capital. It is true that Obasanjo recently laid the foundation stone for a $350 million direct reduction steel complex in Warri to be completed by 1981 and this could be the beginning of a basis for indigenous manufacture. However, the plant is being constructed by German and Austrian companies with capital provided by banks in those countries.

Education is geared to inflating the ranks of the already grossly inefficient and parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie and to supplying foreign companies with skilled labour. Nigeria now has thirteen universities with over 60,000 registered students. In the new budget almost one seventh of total government spending (capital and recurrent) is on education. The biggest allocation in the recurrent budget is for Universal Primary Education (just ahead of Defence expenditure for the first time) and tuition fees for secondary

education have been abolished. The north is still lagging behind in education and the five northern universities were recently closed down over demonstrations against the new Joint Admissions Matriculation Board, claiming it was operating in favour of the south (three quarters of all admissions are southern).

The 1979 budget has continued with the very timid reformism by taking further small steps to conserve foreign exchange by, for example, increasing import duties and banning certain imported goods (which has resulted in the recent lay-off of thousands of workers in the retail and distribution business). These measures were not provoked so much by a desire to stimulate local manufacture as by the huge current account deficit which had developed by 1978 so that foreign exchange had declined by over 50 per cent by that year. Consequently, Nigeria borrowed about $1.5 billion from the World Bank and European commercial banks, so that despite its oil Nigeria is now following the 'classical' neocolonial path in being heavily indebted (with all its political implications) to the imperialist "rentier states".

Bourgeois constitution and bourgeois parties

In a broadcast on 1st October 1975 Mohammed announced details of a five-stage programme for return to civilian rule by 1st October 1979. This programme has involved the creation of more states (making 19), the adoption of a new constitution and the reorganisation of local government.

The close alliance between the military and the neocolonial bourgeoisie is revealed in the very nature of the programme for return to civilian rule. The constitution, based on the American presidential system, was drafted by 49 nominees drawn almost entirely from the commercial and bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The Constituent Assembly which approved the constitution is itself an undemocratic institution. Although elections took place in August 1977, in nine out of 19 states the local government councils were elected on a restricted franchise. Military governors put their nominees into every single council and 77 out of 203 seats were uncontested, such is the level of apathy among the majority of the population. The constitution itself, which comes into effect in

October this year, seals the exercise by jealously guarding private property in detail.

When the 'ban on politics' was lifted in September 1978 the 40 or more parties formed were expected to meet the regulations for registration by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) with just three months of political activity. In December FEDECO announced that only five parties had been accepted for registration, and it soon became clear that these parties were a re-emergence of the ruling class parties which existed before the 1966 coup. The five parties, already the parties of the rich, are receiving a grant from the military rulers, while trade union sponsorship of parties has been prohibited.

The five parties contesting the elections have not declared any anti-imperialist measures whatsoever. They all represent the major bourgeois groupings of the First Republic and are led by the same politicians. They all identify Nigeria's problems in terms of personal greed, lack of national unity, inadequate education and neglected agriculture. However, they may be divided on superficial criteria into two mildly reformist parties which sometimes refer to themselves as 'socialist' (Unity Party of Nigeria, People's Redemption Party) and three unabashed businessmen's clubs (National Party of Nigeria, Nigeria People's Party, Great Nigeria People's Party).

The UPN is led by 70-year-old Obafemi Awolowo, previously premier of the Western Region, who has been in politics for 42 years. He was the pioneer advocate of universal primary education and introduced the scheme into the West in 1955. Awolowo has stated that the programme for a "socialist" Nigeria involves free universal education, free universal health care, integrated rural development and full employment. He has also said: "Essentially, we want to become a producing people, not to remain consumers forever dependent on foreigners for things we can produce ourselves" but without explaining how the UPN intends to deal with foreign companies or how it would cater for the interests of the working class.

The People's Redemption Party is led by the aged Aminu Kano and also uses a socialist vocabulary, but is in no way distinguished from the UPN except that it is a party based in the north while the UPN is southern. Like the UPN it has attracted some of the old guard of reformist socialists such as S.G. Ikoku and Imoudu.

The NPP is led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, 74 years of age, and previously president of Nigeria. The party promotes the confused doctrine of "new welfarism", which Azikiwe has described as an "amalgam of capitalism, socialism and welfarism". In reality the party proposes to reduce company tax from 50 per cent to 33.3 per cent "so as to give incentive to foreign investors to have confidence in this country". Azikiwe has also announced a policy of partial de-nationalisation, for example, of the Coal and Electricity authorities to make them "profitable", of inviting foreign companies to come and exploit presently untapped minerals, and of returning once private schools to their "owners".

The NPN is led by Shagari, who has strong connections with the multinationals and has been in top government posts for two decades. He has declared that his party "stands for nationalism and patriotism" and that this is served by policies which are "neither East nor West, neither capitalist nor socialist". At the same time the NPN manifesto promises "to encourage the investment of foreign capital . . . and to ensure that unjustifiable limitations on drawing profits will be eliminated . . . The NPN is committed to immediate review of bans on importation of goods to restore international trade in Nigeria". There can be no doubt that this party will be highly favoured by foreign interests.

The GNPP is led by Waziri Ibrahim, the second Nigerian ever to be appointed a district manager by Unilever and who subsequently held two ministerial posts. This party split from the NPP and is identical except for its different geographical basis.

None of these parties has made clear its position with regard to the labour movement. One might be correct in concluding that they are therefore in agreement with the continuation of a freeze on wages, with the anti-labour laws (Decree 21 of 1976, and 15 of 1977), with the manner in which trade unions have been depoliticised and put under state control.

The Working Class Movement

The only party with a working class base is the Socialist Working People's Party which was inaugurated in November 1978 but has not been allowed to contest the elections.

The party is historically rooted in the small, pre-independence Marxist Group and its successor the Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party of the First Republic. Its formation was the culmination of several merger efforts which followed the division which split the SWAFP at the 1964 elections into three tendencies. One tendency is reformist and is represented by S.G. Ikoku, who has long advocated a non-Marxist road to socialism and is now a leading member of the PRP. Another tendency is represented by Ola Oni and regrouped in 1978 into the small Socialist Party of Workers, Farmers and Youths (SPWFY) which has since broken up. The Oni faction was accused by the SWPP of a propensity for unnecessary collaboration with the state, and this seems to be borne out by the fact that many members (including Oni) have now joined the UPN. The third and most important tendency now forms the backbone of the SWPP and accepts a Marxist-Leninist approach to class-struggle. The declared aim of the party, in its constitution, is "to organise the working people of Nigeria towards winning political power and building a socialist state founded on the ideals of Scientific Socialism, that is, on the impregnable alliance of the working class, the farmers, progressive intelligentsia, the masses of the toiling people of our country and on proletarian internationalism".[2]

Many of the original 1978 parties were ethnic in character and this is one reason that the government formulated the requirement that only parties with offices in at least two thirds of the 19 states would be registered. However, the SWPP protested that the rules of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), especially the brevity of pre-registration preparation allowed, favoured the wealthy. The SWPP stated sarcastically in its journal, *New Horizon,* "Only bourgeois parties mobilise the people politically the way FEDECO demands — a three month miracle". The SWPP has subsequently stated that it will continue to function as "an association" to bring together all progressive forces on a working class platform, and that as from October 1 it will insist on functioning as a legal organisation.

There are a handful of unaffiliated socialist intellectuals and student socialist groups and some of the individuals concerned can be traced to the now defunct Anti-Poverty Movement (APMON). Some of these individuals were detained by Gowon immediately prior to his downfall.

By the time Nigeria had become independent in 1960 industrial unionism was well established, but it was faced both with internal problems and with hostility from the state. The victory of the workers in the historic 1964 general strike was thwarted by the ruling class with collaborators working within the central organs of the unions. The situation worsened under the military regime which took over in 1966 as it prohibited strikes, imposed compulsory bargaining, and prevented the working class from participating as an organised body in political activity.

The present regime has made further efforts to stifle trade union opposition. A Trade Union Decree of last year has reduced unilaterally over 1,000 unions to 70 and centralised these under a single legally recognised body, the Nigerian Labour Congress (inaugurated February 1978), so replacing four previous bodies. Although the trade union unity which has resulted has some progressive implications the manner in which this was imposed puts, and was meant to put, serious limitations on militancy. The NLC is now financially supported by the state which has banned any international labour organisation from operating in Nigeria or giving financial assistance.

Eleven of the most militant and longstanding trade union leaders have been banned without explanation, including Imoudu, Goodluck and Bassey and others prominent in the 1964 strike. A senior government official, Mr. M.O. Abiodun, has been directing the whole operation of depoliticising the unions: restructuring them, drawing up their constitutions, and nominating delegates to the most important conferences. The 70 unions include 18 senior staff associations and nine employers' organisations, which indicates the true nature of the Congress.

These anti-labour measures have not however dampened the militancy of the working class. The influence of the SWPP in the unions is considerable, and progressive anti-imperialist forces are the dominant influence in the union leadership.

Recently there have been strikes by Peugeot workers in Kaduna, Volkswagen workers and port employees in Lagos, all of which led to police confrontations and victimisations. The most significant factors from a revolutionary point of view are the tremendous growth in the industrial working class from about 100,000 at independence to four

million at present, the impoverishment of the rural areas and the creation of masses of agricultural wage-earners and tenant farmers, the growth of the urban unemployed, and the huge extension of education at all levels.

The new civilian rulers will have the full support of imperialism, and the recent OPEC conference has raised oil prices so that it is likely that with the Iranian cutback in production the civilians will find themselves with the highest ever annual total of oil revenue. In the short term it is difficult to know whether civilian rule will last, although it is not perhaps a fundamental issue. As Lt-General T.Y. Danjuma, Army Chief of Staff, has frankly said recently: "It is now fashionable in Nigeria to talk about a military regime as an aberration, and that a return to civilian rule means a return to democracy. This is a fallacy because we have never had a democracy in Nigeria – the question of 'returning to democracy' does not, therefore, arise".[3]

Notes

1. Onimode, B., "Mixed Economy or People's Economy?', *New Horizon,* (Lagos), Vol. 3. No. 2, p. 15.
2. *New Horizon,* Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 6.
3. *Africa,* (London) No. 90, February 1979, p. 59.

BOOK REVIEWS

TRIBALISM — A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

Ethnic Problems of Tropical Africa: Can They Be Solved? by R. N. Ismagilova, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1978. 290 pp.

The understandable reaction of many African revolutionaries to ethnic and tribal conflicts has been one of rejection. Tribalism, it has often (and with much justice) been said, is a divisive force and an ideological mechanism helping imperialism and domestic reactionaries. Africa needs national and continental consolidation, at the level of international political relations; internally, we need mass organisation and revolutionary action, not ethnic particularism and pre-modern diversions.

That view isn't good enough. Ethnic consciousness is *not* proving to be a short-lived transitional stage, ebbing away with social progress and modernity. Neither is it adequate to describe the ethnic allegiances and tribally-based relations of millions of Africans as

false consciousness, something which has simply to be transcended. It is not only culturally barren to do so: most importantly, it is a *political* problem, evident in the ethnic dimension to the most grievous wars and upheavals of our continent in recent times. Whatever the significant role of outside intervention in Nigeria, Eritrea, Shaba, and so on, there was the vital fact of powerful ethnic/national difference which could organise itself — or be organised — around real economic and political injustices.

Comrade Ismagilova's book is the first major attempt to come to terms with the shortcomings of Marxist work on ethnic and national problems in the African context. She is well qualified: a senior member of the Africa Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and an anthropological specialist in African ethnicity.

Her starting-point is the urgency of the political question of African ethnic relations, and the shortcomings of their analysis so far. For imperialism and reaction to have used ethnicity so powerfully, she remarks, it must indeed be an effective force: we need therefore to understand it rather than rest content with criticising its manipulators. In stressing the long-term character of ethnic feeling, Ismagilova points to the particular qualities of African ethnic problems. National and ethnic differences are universal — she refers, most obviously, to the long experience of the Soviet Union in dealing with many nationalities as a central task of its social and economic development. But African countries are remarkable for the transitional nature of all aspects of life — the combination of modern (usually capitalist) and pre-modern (mainly communal) relations in the economy, in politics, in personal social relations, in ideas. Ethnicity, she notes, has a dual character — it is both disintegrating (in the sense of divisive), and integrating or consolidating of social life.

The solutions to the political problem of ethnic difference must be sought at two related levels. Firstly, there is the question of state or government policy — on international boundaries, on the treatment of minorities, and on correcting past ethnic injustices. Many African countries of course find ethnic questions being combined not only with boundary questions but also with irredentist religion (Islam in particular) to create overwhelming political, economic and sometimes military problems.

Secondly, however, there is the question of the effect of ethnicity on social transformation and revolutionary political organisation. Since much of our continent remains under various forms of capitalist and pro-imperialist rule, we cannot simply talk of tribalism and national problems as a matter for governments. Ethnicity has to be dealt with in the course of building national liberation movements, in solving the problems of day-do-day revolutionary politics — in creating the very conditions for a people's state in which ethnic difference is a source of creativity rather than diversion and destruction.

Comrade Ismagilova gives us a very thorough and creative review of the extent of ethnicity as a problem for African states, and of the constitutional and political initiatives in the OAU and in individual countries, for dealing with it. Based on her own research in Africa and on an astonishingly wide-ranging bibliography, she has chapters on boundaries, self-determination and separatism, on the roots of ethnic tension and conflict, and on the interaction of national and social factors. In all these discussions she shows an impressive grasp both of the general problems, and of particular national experiences. She is able to refer knowledgeably to some 150 different African ethnic groups, to explain the evolution of the myriad patterns over the colonial and postcolonial periods, and yet to retain a clear view of the shortcomings of both bourgeois and Marxist explanations in this area. All this is a considerable achievement, and will be of inestimable value.

But two difficulties remain unresolved in her treatment, and are offered here partly in comradely criticism, and partly to point to work which African revolutionaries still need to tackle.

Firstly, there does not seem to be an adequate treatment of tribalism as an economic force. I do not simply mean the archaic survivals of a communal economy. Rather, ethnicity can incorporate a system of economic relations, and occupy a particular place in the overall economy, which imparts its material base and gives it its peculiar, "modern" political power. Ismagilova refers to some of these features, but does not develop them very much: the reproduction of tribal relationships and organisations in African cities and in modern proletarian employment, the role of ethnic identity in competition between national capitalists, the creation of

ethnic organisations as a vehicle for capitalist accumulation or for "brotherisation" in employment (particularly State employment), and so on. Tribalism, as the author stresses, is not merely archaic: what we need therefore is a better understanding of its role in the modern economy — particularly, I think, in the slow and contradictory dissolution of pre-capitalist modes of production.

The second difficulty has already been alluded to. This study concentrates on the policies of states and the solutions open to governments. This is understandable partly because ethnicity must be dealt with at the level of the whole society, and partly perhaps because the Soviet experience was that national problems could only be effectively tackled *after* the establishment of the Soviet state: the Bolsheviks could make only limited progress among the oppressed nationalities before the October revolution.

From our perspective, however, the ethnic issue is one of urgent revolutionary practice. There can be little significant progress in African revolutionary struggle if the real barriers presented by ethnic differences are not understood and surmounted. The consequences of underestimating the ethnic factor can be readily seen in the revolutionary experience of our continent, as can the urgency of a political solution to ethnicity *within the revolutionary movement* as well as in the apparatus of the State. This is true even in the most advanced countries, such as Angola, and in the most industrialised and proletarianised, such as South Africa itself. It would be valuable to have a companion volume to Ismagilova's which frankly discussed and analysed the ethnic problems within the politics of national liberation — as an issue of ideology and consciousness, of policy, and of organisation.

A. Langa

THE NATIONALIST CONSPIRATORS

The Super-Afrikaners, Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond, by Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom; **Brotherhood of Power, An Expose of the Secret Afrikaner Broederbond,** by J.H.P. Serfontein; **Die Afrikaner Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar,** by A.N. Pelzer.

The Chairman of the Afrikaner Broederbond, Mr H.J. Klopper, said at its inaugural meeting on June 5, 1918: "Our aim is a brotherhood of Afrikaners". A few days later, on July 2, 1918, the aim was formulated as "a melting together of Afrikaners . . . to serve the interest of Afrikaners at all times . . . to bring Afrikaners to consciousness, to create self-respect and love for our own language, history, country and volk". The organisation remained in the open for only six years, going underground in 1924 and continuing to operate secretly to this day.

Earlier this year, in a television broadcast, the former premier B.J. Vorster, questioned about his membership of the Broederbond, replied blandly that it was purely a cultural organisation, but neither he nor anybody else who has maintained this view has been able to explain why a cultural organisation needed to function in secret. The Broederbond began, like the Nationalist Party itself, as a reaction to British imperialism on the one hand and black resistance to oppression on the other, and it went underground because its leadership realised soon enough that to achieve their purpose nothing would suffice but the capture of state power. In a circular issued by the Broederbond on January 16, 1934, the chairman, Professor J. C. van Rooy of Potchefstroom University and the general secretary I.M. Lombard wrote: "Let us focus attention on the fact that the primary consideration is: whether Afrikanerdom will reach its ultimate destiny of domination (baasskap) in South Africa. Brothers, our solution of South Africa's ailments is not whether one party or another shall obtain the whip hand, but that the Afrikaner-Broederbond shall govern South Africa".

In fact, the Broederbond has never succeeded in uniting Afrikanerdom. Some of the most prominent Afrikaners like Smuts and Hertzog were excluded from its ranks, and even today it is only Afrikaners of a certain orientation who are admitted to membership. But what the Broederbond *did* do was unite Afrikaners who accepted

as their philosophy the doctrine of Christian Nationalism (which Vorster himself in 1942 equated with nazism in Germany and fascism in Italy), guide them to power in 1948 and mastermind the policies of government in the ensuing 31 years. The South Africa we see around us today, with its colour bars, race hatred and violent conflicts and its threats of aggression against the outside world, is indisputably the work of the Broederbond.

In his book Serfontein summarises the aims of the Broederbond as follows:

"Firstly, to maintain a separate white Afrikaans volk, seemingly at all costs. Secondly, the establishment of Afrikaner domination and rule in South Africa. Thirdly, as part of this process, the subtle Afrikanerisation of the English section. Finally the maintenance of a white South African nation built on the rock of the Afrikaner volk with the Broederbond the hard core of that volk". Missing from this definition though implicit in it is the maintenance of white domination, which Serfontein perhaps takes for granted though the Broederbond itself certainly doesn't.

In an address on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Broederbond in 1968, the then chairman Dr Piet Meyer, still chairman of the SABC, stressed that the future of the Broederbond in the next 50 years "rests on the unambiguous premise that the future of white and non-white nations of our country depends primarily on ensuring the future of the Afrikaner nation as an independent Christian National nation at the southern tip of Africa". Had "British liberal" politics won out in South Africa, said Meyer, the country would have ended up with "so-called majority rule" which would have meant "the end of an independent white nation; it would have permanently damaged the independent national future of the non-whites". Afrikaner nationalism was the only antidote to this poison. The corollary of this thesis is that the destruction of white supremacy depends on the destruction of Afrikaner nationalism — a notion which, coming from the enemy, deserves the attention of all sections of our movement.

Despite the secrecy with which it has surrounded itself, a great deal has been known about the Broederbond from the 1930s onwards. The Hertzog and Smuts governments were primed about its activities by their intelligence services, and a war-time report on the

organisation by the Director of Military Intelligence Dr E.G. Malherbe still remains one of the best sources of information about the extent to which the Broederbond and its leadership were influenced and used by the Nazis before and during the war. In more recent years a flood of Broederbond documents has found its way into the hands of the opposition press, and Wilkins, Strydom and Serfontein have all played a part in the various *Sunday Times* exposures which have familiarised us with the nature and work of this sinister organisation.

In their books they have revealed all — or at any rate all that they have been able to lay hands on, for it is certain much still remains undiscovered. What emerges is a picture of the way in which the Nationalist Afrikaner elite has worked its way into all the positions of power and influence in our society, from the Cabinet downwards, thus enabling the Broederbond to determine national policy and ensure its execution. And the documents brought to light in these two books show that every aspect of Nationalist Government policy has been discussed and formulated by the Broederbond, sometimes even to the exclusion of the Cabinet on which one or two non-Broeders including English-speakers also sit. The Broederbond has had its nose in everything, from state relations with India and China, Rhodesia and Namibia, to (in the words of Dr Meyer in 1972) "the greetings and the handshakes of the non-whites". Nothing has been left to chance.

In the course of its development the character of the Broederbond has changed. In its early years it claimed to be largely concerned with the "upliftment" of the Afrikaner, hundreds of thousands of whom were poor whites said to be groaning under the economic oppression of the English, the Jews and British imperialism, not to mention black competition. Serfontein even goes so far as to claim, despite abundant evidence to the contrary in his own book, that the Broederbond was "largely culturally orientated" until Dr. Meyer became its chief and Verwoerd Prime Minister in 1960. However that may be, as the position of the Afrikaner people changed and class differentiation became more marked, so the Broederbond changed, becoming much more an organisation of the wealthy, the influential and the powerful, reflecting in its policies and work the position and ideology of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie. Wilkins and Strydom draw

attention to the fact that today very few workers belong to the organisation.

"There are fewer than 10 miners for instance. Although the Bond manipulated miners as a contribution to the 1948 election victory . . . it seems they do not feel at home in its ranks. For this reason there has been a campaign to recruit more mining members in recent years. It has failed miserably. There was even an attempt to establish under Broederbond control a secret organisation for workers. Although they financed it heavily, that failed too. The reason is simple: the Broederbond has become the home of the rich and powerful Super-Afrikaners".

The first two books under review contain a mass of detail culled from the documents in the possession of the authors — so much detail, in fact, that it is hard sometimes to see the wood for the trees, and one feels the lack of political analysis. Professor Pelzer, whose book was written for the Executive Committee of the Broederbond, knows most but tells least of its secrets. Naturally enough he, too, claims the Broederbond is almost exclusively a cultural organisation, but he gives the game away in one sentence in which he admits that the main task of the Broederbond has been to create "a climate in which no party which is out of touch with the national aspirations of Afrikanerdom can prosper in the long run".

At this moment in time, following Muldergate and the sacking of Vorster, Mulder and Van den Bergh, the publication of the Wiehahn and Riekert commission reports, the much publicised feuds between Treurnicht and Koornhof etc., it is becoming more difficult to decide what the aspirations of Afrikanerdom are and who is entitled to express them. The Broederbond must be working overtime to produce some form of consensus out of the ideological conflict and chaos which multiplies around them.

P.M.

HIGH SPEED SURVEY

Southern Africa Stands Up: The Revolutions in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa by Wilfred Burchett (Urizen Books, New York.)

Angola is obviously the southern African country in which Wilfred Burchett is mainly interested. About half his book is devoted to Angola and this half is interesting and valuable. The story of MPLA's struggle is told from February 4, 1961, when the armed struggle first began, to December 1977, when a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party was formed. Much of the story is told through interviews with MPLA cadres, from senior leaders through middle-rank army officers to rank and file militants. Though the style of the interviews sometimes lapses into a rather breathless journalese, they nevertheless succeed in adding vividness and immediacy to the story.

Among the material which will be new to most readers are detailed accounts of the recruitment of Holden Roberto by the CIA in 1962, and of collaboration between Jonas Savimbi and the Portuguese army in 1972. There is also a detailed account of the attempted coup by Nito Alves in May, 1977. All this material is presented from a point of view sturdily sympathetic to the MPLA. While it does not pretend to any profound political or economic analysis, it is a very acceptable account of the main events and the chief personalities involved.

The section on Mozambique is shorter and gives only the briefest summary of the years of the armed struggle against the Portuguese. The post-independence period is more fully dealt with and the problems with which the Frelimo government has been faced are movingly described. The author has had several interesting interviews with Samora Machel, whose views not only on domestic problems but also on solidarity with the struggles in Zimbabwe and South Africa are given.

The last section of the book is comparatively disappointing. It attempts to deal with Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa in a very limited space and it is clear that the author has not the same familiarity with these countries as he has with Angola and Mozambique. He happened to be in Geneva at the time of the abortive conference in October 1976, with the result that this

conference gets more space than the rest of the Zimbabwe story put together. No doubt the Geneva conference seemed topical and important when the book was written, but subsequent events have reduced it to a very minor episode in the history of the Zimbabwe revolution. The attention given to it here makes for a very unbalanced whole.

South Africa receives the briefest treatment of all. There can be no complaint about the sources to which Mr Burchett has turned for information. His account is based largely on an interview with the late M. P. Naicker, together with Joe Slovo's contribution to the Penguin book *Southern Africa, The New Politics of Revolution*. It follows that his account contains a number of valid points. It remains, however, a mere outline sketch of the South African situation. On the basis of such a sketch, it is a little rash of Mr Burchett to put forward opinions on difficult questions, such as the question whether the South African armed struggle should be mainly urban or rural. Nevertheless, his loyalties are in the right place and the good points of his book by far outweigh the weaknesses.

P.M.

WORSE THAN SOUTH AFRICA

The Workers of Namibia: by Gillian and Suzanne Cronje, International Defence and Aid Fund, London £1.50.

This very useful handbook contains a wealth of material on the situation of the working class in Namibia. The facts are soberly and unemotionally presented, but are made interesting and readable by the use of verbatim quotations from individual workers talking about their problems.

The authors have clearly brought out the two respects in which the workers of Namibia are even worse off than their comrades in the Republic of South Africa. Firstly, wage levels are substantially lower in Namibia, in spite of the fact that the cost of living is higher. Secondly, the vicious migratory labour system is more extensive, and involves a higher proportion of the total Namibian labour force.

than is the case in the Republic. The migratory system in Namibia is known as the 'contract' system and involves between half and three quarters of all black employees. It is designed to ensure, not only that workers have no permanent residential rights in the urban areas and no opportunity to bring their families with them, but also that there is no competition for labour between employers, no possibility for a worker to move from job to job and no prospects of promotion or acquisition of skills.

In addition to describing these problems in detail, the book gives various population and economic statistics, describes the great strike movement of 1971-2, and briefly summarises the history and policies of SWAPO. An appendix brings the story right up to the 'election' of December 1978.

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